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THE DOCTOR WIFE

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The Doctor Wife

A NOVEL

BY

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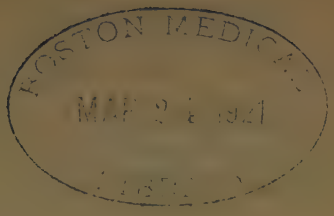

I

DOCTOR FERNAND GUEMÉNE had risen, according to his habit, at seven o'clock, took his usual shower-bath, dressed quickly, and rang for the morning cup of tea, which was brought to his bedroom and placed on the little table near the open window, where he partook of the light breakfast while enjoying the fresh air and view of the river beneath the window.

He dwelt in a small, quaint house at the extreme end of the Ile St.-Louis. There he had established himself as the doctor of that quarter of old Paris. From the high windows of the eighteenth-century style, built in pairs in the narrow façade, he could see, just at the foot of the walls of the house, the rippling waters of the Seine, flowing under the heavy branches of the Italian poplars that, like a sumptuous curtain of green, bordered the bank of the river. Every now and then the lazy tide of the river quickened, and dashed with increased force against the frail wooden landing bridges moored on the bank; beneath the window a ferry-boat approached to disgorge its passengers, or some light pleasure craft swept gaily by. The young doctor, absorbed in his thoughts, paid no heed to the sound of the river traffic, the hand—idly toying with a portion of the appetising rolls-and-butter, forming a delicious complement to the tea—trembled slightly. It was plain that the necessary appetite was missing, as presently he thrust aside the plate and half-finished cup

of tea, arose, and, seizing his hat, walked to the door. There he paused abruptly and, turning, regarded critically the primitively furnished room.

"If she is willing," he thought, "I shall at once buy new furniture. It will be charming with those enclosed wardrobes that I have seen in Brittany, those beautifully carved armoires of oak. I shall order one from Quimper. She can keep her linen there, also a pretty work-table—yes, that will be necessary; but does she sew?"

Then his gaze rested on the one simple iron bedstead.

"Oh! the bed, one in brass, very simple yet elegant."

And then quickly:

"We shall drape the windows in white muslin, as mother did her room."

He was tall, and carried himself with a certain cold dignity. His head, large and round, was rendered still more striking by its heavy masses of thick wavy hair of brown. Under the eye-glasses his eyes glistened with the emotion evoked by the vision of that sweet chamber—a chamber veiled in white muslin, furnished daintily, and where, in the shadowy twilight or mysterious dawn, glided the slender figure of a young girl crowned by a wealth of dark tresses.

On leaving the house he followed the ancient quay Bourbon, with its narrow pavements and terraces, its steps and railings on a level with the river. He turned into the bridge of St.-Louis. Before him flowed the Seine in two deep streams, that encircled the "Cité" with a belt of water reflecting the pure blue tints of the sky with sombre beauty. It was a warm morning of July; an opaque mist of silvery grey veiled the horizon. On the wharves surrounding the sister isles of the "Cité," the carts and waggons rolled with noisy bustle. The intense brilliancy of the sunlight burnished the blue tints of the

waters, the green of the foliage, the rose of the façades and faded bricks, brightening the gloom of blackness and decay stamped upon the ancient pile of stone and marble in that Gothic Cité of terrors, of mystery, and of dreams that is called Notre-Dame.

Doctor Gueméné passed through the rue du Cloître, and the Parvis, and found himself before the Hospital of the Hôtel-Dieu. As he approached the object of his walk, his face revealed an ever-increasing disquietude in proportion to his steps. When he penetrated the Parvis, the sight of the vast empty space gave him a sensation of giddiness; at the aspect of the formidable buildings of the hospital bristling with chimneys and ventilators, he closed his eyes, then with a nervous flutter the eyelids opened and he regained control of himself.

He entered.

"Has Mademoiselle Herlinge arrived?" he asked of the first nurse he met in the long cloister-like lobby.

"Yes, sir; she passed scarcely five minutes ago."

"Thanks!"

A crowd of nurses and outdoor patients invaded the vestibule. Gueméné pressed through the throng. It seemed to him that every eye was riveted upon him. He hurried into the central court. This noble court, with its successive terraces, its marble steps, paths of yellow gravel and parterres of flowers, extended to the portico of the chapel at the far end. The open galleries and wide arcades, rising tier upon tier, enclosed it with befitting grandeur. Doctor Gueméné paused, and raising his head, gazed upwards, letting his glance sweep the circle of galleries. A smile lit up his eyes. He saw the slight figure of a young woman beside the balustrade of one of the galleries on the third floor. She was leaning on her elbows and gazing down upon him. Gueméné loved that young

woman. He had written to her the previous day soliciting an interview. In the letter he begged her to signify her consent to his request by waiting for him on that particular terrace. He would know then that she did not repulse his advance. It would be the answer to his letter. She was there. She had not repulsed him. The young woman was Thérèse Herlinge, daughter of the famous Herlinge of the Institute, and house-surgeon in the Hospital Hôtel-Dieu. She had achieved that enviable position of house-surgeon in the most famous of hospitals through her arduous study under her father's direction, and enjoyed the esteem of the world connected with the great Hôtel-Dieu, as much for her personal merit as for the distinguished name she bore. She was the gifted daughter of a gifted and renowned father. As Gueméné perceived the slender form and recognised the distinctive grace of the small, well-poised head, with its crown of jet-black hair, a happy fancy seized him. The vast hospital building, with its galleries, its columns, its arcades, and balconies, its gangways enhancing the scenic aspect of its construction, at once picturesque and massive, appeared to him a mediæval stronghold converted into a modern palace for that modern princess of science. There she reigned. She was the charming châtelaine of that fortress of science that battled daily with the invasion of disease and death, and, like the noble ladies of the olden times, she held court there; but in lieu of the silken brocade robes of ceremony, she was sheathed in a robe of cool grey linen, with the apron of the house-surgeon girding her supple hips as she leaned on the balustrade terrace and watched for the coming of her knight.

The fancy passed, and he brought himself back to reality by a judicious control of the haste that would have sent him flying to her side. He ascended the steps leisurely.

When he arrived she greeted him with a smile and gave him her hand. He grasped the hand and pressed it gently as he said in a voice that trembled with eagerness :

" Then, it is yes ! "

" Wait—wait," she replied, with a frank, innocent laugh to hide her embarrassment. " I must talk with you. I must know you better. You have been to me only a comrade—a good comrade; now you appear in an altogether new aspect. I am greatly surprised and also perplexed, I assure you. I really am at a loss to know what to say, how to explain."

Her hesitation was charming. It gave him hope. There was a pause, during which he gazed with eloquent eyes upon her proud and expressive face, more noble than beautiful in its rich brunette colouring where the large dark eyes glowed with the power and serenity of a woman who knows that she is beloved. One firm white hand smoothed with a characteristic gesture the satin-like ripples of hair at the back of her neck. A soft down, scarcely perceptible, accentuated the rosy line of the mobile upper lip parted in a winning smile. She had in the rich bloom of her young womanhood the air of a queen. Presently she spoke.

" We cannot remain in this gallery. The patients are constantly passing to and fro, and the *infirmiers* are watching us curiously through the glass doors. We must talk seriously over this matter, and it will be best to go to my little laboratory. Will you come, Gueméné ? " She pronounced the name of her companion in a quite different tone from that in which she addressed him as her fellow student of the great hospital. There was an imperceptible shade of affection in her voice that filled him with hope. They passed together into the building in the direction of the laboratories situated on the same

floor. Her face wore a new expression. It was a smile of mingled contemplation, satisfaction, and happiness.

Her special laboratory adjoined one of the sick-wards. It was small and cumbered with bottles, testing-glasses, anatomical specimens in bowls, and books. A table was pressed against the window. It was covered with a medley of surgical objects, among which a microscope was prominent. To the right of the table was a stove, which resembled a strong box, for the cultivation of microbes by the process of boiling water or the forcing through heat. A blow-pipe attached to the gas-burner, which conveyed fuel to the apparatus, filled the small study with the sound of its humming. The young girl cleared the only chair of its burden of a sort of aquarium of white mice swathed in wadding, and made a sign to the doctor to be seated. She installed herself in the operating-chair.

"Yes," she began; "your letter of yesterday very much astonished me. It is now, I believe, four years since we have known each other. The first year we met for the first time as fellow pupils of the Charity Hospital. Then followed two years when we were both house-surgeons of the Children's Hospital, and this year when I finished my course. I have seen you frequently as a member of my father's clinic. This is the term of our old friendship, and during all the time you have been the most agreeable of comrades and the one whom I esteemed the most; but I never imagined that you loved me. I have never suspected anything like this!

"Thérèse!" prayed Gueméné, abandoning himself to the joy of calling her by that sweet and familiar name, "I, also, did not suspect I loved you. I had worked a long time by your side like any other medical student, but I was also a dull fellow—a blockhead—without really knowing you. I did not approve of the lady-doctor,

neither her intelligence nor her capacity; they had not that exquisite character, that necessary touch of nature that renders you sympathetic to all, and that gradually revealed you to me in the light of a truly superior woman and tender friend. I found a continual pleasure in your presence, but I was unconscious of the real meaning of that sentiment. You took possession of me very gently by a charm so subtle and so incessant, that I did not feel the chains that were binding me to you. The delight I felt in being near you I attributed to your profound intellect, to your wit and delicious humour. I loved to have you for my neighbour when attending the sick-ward. Without dreaming of that life of incomparable happiness we might pass together—side by side—of which the busy life, the gay comradeship in the tumult of the hospital was only the prelude. Day by day you filled me with you—you penetrated my soul, my intellect, my whole being, by the sweetness of your joyous spirit, the witchery of your frank gaze, and when I left the Children's Hospital to establish a practice for myself, I felt the void that your absence made in my life rankle like a wound. My need of you was revealed to me. I discovered how necessary you were to my existence, when, on an evening of indiscribable loneliness I refound you in a photograph of a group of the house-surgeons taken the last year we were together at the Children's Hospital. Oh! Thérèse! you can never know what I felt when I saw your dear sweet face again, and how my heart, heavy with sadness, was relieved by the tears I shed over that precious photograph. I wept like a child—tears of passion, of tenderness, of hope when I saw again your slender form in the familiar white blouse, and the black chignon of your beautiful hair, at the back of the little group in the picture."

His emotion, his pallor, his voice vibrating with love,

touched the cold heart of the young girl. She looked at him shyly as she said gravely:

"My good Gueméné, you love me so much as all that? I thank you!"

He caught her hands in his warm grasp and pressed them with passion, as he slowly shook his head to emphasise the words stammered forth under the stress of his emotion.

"Never—never—can I find words to express how dear you are to me, Thérèse!"

At the same time he experienced a thrill of triumph, of pride, to read in her face the effect of his declaration. He had roused in this rare and gifted girl a new feeling. He had opened for her the first glimpse of the sentimental side of life. She who had been so engrossed in her studies and scientific researches now listened to him fascinated; she yielded already to the spell that half-enchained her without revolt. She felt the magnetism of his touch mount to her brain: that virginal cerebral that had never known the intoxication of love responded to the mysterious current flowing from the powerful grasp of the young man. Those amorous hands moulded on her the first link in the chains of her servitude. With a sense of delicious timidity in her voice she murmured faintly:

"Fernand."

A few moments of silence followed—moments pregnant with self-communing too sweet and intimate for words. Then, gently disengaging her hands, Mademoiselle Herlinge spoke:

"Truly, I have thought little of marriage. During my student days I have seen much of young men, but not one of them dreamed of courting me. It is loneliness and nothing to do that gives young girls the thought of marriage. Thank God, I have scarcely had time to be lonely or bored with myself. Still, I have sometimes

desired to be loved—curiously enough, without thinking of loving any one. I have been desirous to know what love really is; I have wished for love, but with an impersonal feeling, with a vague and fleeting vision of the far future when love would come to seek me. In all sincerity, Fernand, I do not love you now, but perhaps it will come. I have a deep esteem for you, *mon ami*!"

She gave him a smile of tender encouragement. The doctor, on his side, began eagerly to plead his cause.

"You bear an illustrious name," he said; "a glorious career awaits you. I am not a poor doctor without reputation, without fortune. I have patiently awaited the formation of a good practice before offering you my life. Then, Thérèse, my income being assured, I hesitated no longer to ask you to be my wife, certain that I could make you happy and that our marriage would be worthy of you. You are not a young girl to be influenced by the vanities of a fashionable existence, the desire for great wealth. I am a man of simple tastes; I am an honest man, and I love you—that is all I can say. Will you give yourself to me?"

"Yes," she answered, in a voice that revealed how deeply moved she was by his simple, straightforward proposal.

He trembled like one distraught with love, and, burying his head in his hands, cried brokenly:

"I am too happy. I am too happy!"

When the young man recovered himself, he raised his head and met the astonished gaze of Thérèse. There was in that regard a new and softened expression. They looked into each other's eyes for some moments without speaking. It was a silent interchange of thought, wherein each read an ineffable, tender sentiment that was beyond the power of mere words. There was no sound in the tiny room save the humming of the blow-pipe of the

microbe apparatus. The small, quaint structure of the brass microscope glistened before the window. A fragment of human brain floated in a bowl on one side of it, and on the other a similar bowl held a membrane preserved in spirits, the product of a recent autopsy. Gueméné let his glance hover round this curious laboratory, where the charming girl he loved pursued with singular devotion her masculine studies. Here she confined herself for hours, a beautiful prisoner to the tyranny of science. A great pride in the girl before him took possession of his heart. It filled him with loving wonder, and created, by the force of his own profound passion for science, an ideal woman of the young girl trembling with emotion over his declaration. She would be his perfect mate, this sweet, adorable fiancée of his. An indefinable misgiving assailed him, and he cried suddenly:

"You do not regret, Thérèse?"

"I never regret a decision that I have made," she answered firmly. "I am confident that you will never deceive me, my dear Gueméné."

"The happiness that I promise you will be that which will endure as long as life. It is no transitory passion, no semblance of love, but the real, living heart of an honest man that I offer to a woman such as you are; but I also ask myself if all my devotion will suffice to make you forget your old life—rich, beautiful, and happy as you are. Will you have no longing after your triumphs? Will you not regret your studies, your researches, all this——" He indicated the evidences of her work by a gesture that embraced the curious interior of the little study. "Will you bear it bravely when the time comes for you to renounce this medical work, in which you take such an absorbing interest?"

"But I do not have to renounce medicine to become your wife?"

"It was thus that I understood you, Thérèse!"

Mademoiselle Herlinge became very pale.

"You ask me—you ask me that!"

For a moment both were silent in the presence of this probable misunderstanding. They regarded each other in dismay. Then the young girl cried in a voice that betrayed how great was the sacrifice demanded of her:

"Renounce my profession—give up the practice of medicine!"

"Yes, Thérèse," he repeated in low tones that had the hollow echo of misgiving. "I wish you entirely for myself!"

She shook her head sadly.

"No, no: do not ask me that. I feel, I know, that I cannot do it. Consider that for three years I have given to this all my energy, all my brain, all my will: my vocation is so intrinsically a part of myself—I cannot part with it. I am a doctor. I was born to it, and I shall be a doctor—always, always!"

She emphasised her words by a convulsive gesture of her hands, as though she would retain the subtle possession of her art, that sought to slip through her fingers, thereby guarding passionately that which she had so hardly acquired.

"You speak thus, Thérèse, because the life I offer you is new to you. You do not understand, you are too much of the student to be the woman, completely. Gradually love will vanquish the student in you and you will bloom into the woman, with a woman's perfect soul; you will comprehend why I demand you absolutely for myself—freely and fully—and you will experience what joy it is to love as well as to be loved, as only a true woman can."

"A true woman," exclaimed Thérèse; "but I am a true woman, a real woman, in full possession of all the mental and physical powers that go to make a perfect

one. The half woman is she whose brain remains stunted, whose powers are undeveloped, who thinks in one groove, and whose efforts are bound by the narrow view of a limited sphere. And you wish that I should humble myself to that state! To be candid: I ask myself what is it you think of women; what is it you would expect of them? Do you really know, my poor Gueméné?"

"You wish to know: then I will tell you. I am a man. I seek my mate. I need love to make my life complete. I must make a home, and I must have a wife to guard that home. I am willing to trudge from day to day, to go from house to house visiting the sick, sounding the hearts, relieving the misery of the asthmatics, tending women in child-birth and washing the new-born, giving death certificates; in a word, doing all the drudgery of my profession even at the risk of my life; but I must find my fireside sweet, restful, and compensating in the society of the wife who rules my home and my happiness. I am perhaps selfish, but I am a man and a normal one. I wish you all for myself alone. I cannot share my wife with the world. Ha! ha! ha! the husband of the lady doctor—that will be charming!" He was brutal in his scorn. He pushed the chair from which he rose violently aside, and turning like one ill with some strange frenzy, staggered towards the door of the laboratory. Then, as suddenly, he stopped and, seizing Thérèse by the wrists, cried passionately:

"You madden me. I feel that you will escape me—that you are slipping away. Be mine, Thérèse. I love you: pardon my violence. I have dreamed of such perfect happiness with you by my side, in the traditional marriage, the sacred, true union of man and woman. Do not tell me that it is common and old-fashioned to wish for a marriage where the wife is the ruler of her husband's

home, where she belongs to him alone. It is the only healthy and natural union between man and woman. We cannot be happy, Thérèse, if you practise the profession of medicine, if you attend to the lectures, if you go to the hospitals. If you do, instead of being your joy, the object of your life, the home and the family will be a burden to you. We cannot ruin our life by loading the home with delusions. I appear to you to be encumbered with prejudices, do I not? Nevertheless I am not a retrograde. I would see all women free intellectually, and I grant them the right to cultivate to the highest point their powers where it does not interfere with their natural destiny. I know not how my love for you was born; perhaps it grew from my admiration of your great intellectual gifts. In any case, that equality of intellect will constitute the best element of our happiness. I love your beauty of mind as I love your beauty of body. I am proud of you, but I demand to possess you for myself alone. I will not share you with the world!"

Mademoiselle Herlinge listened to the tense pleading of her lover, with set features and eyes that veiled their tenderness with her habitual cold, bright glance. She gathered all her courage to defend warmly her principles. Her voice trembled with the revolt she could not control as she replied:

"Why demand from me that which you do not grant me in return—your entire life?

"I will explain just what I mean. You would esteem, and rightly, my pretensions excessive if I pressed you, as a proof of your love, to abandon your career. I am a doctor of the same rank as you hold yourself. We have made the same studies. I possess diplomas the same as yours. You are called Doctor—I am known as Doctor. Here, what difference do you see between us?"

"I see a very great difference," answered Gueméné: "This passion that you hide in vain under your calm, this strange, perverse thirst for knowledge that exists in you, the desire to be a doctor—your serene soul knows nothing of this unnatural passion, but your brain and body are being devoured by this unwomanly obsession. Is it right, is it necessary, this violent appetite for science and diplomas? With some women it is for diplomas only, but we see you transformed into an exceptional woman: you expend all your strength on studies that are beyond your power; you brave the difficult life of the student of medicine, and forswear all the traditions of womanly modesty and delicacy; you show a vigour and application more than masculine in fighting the torrent of conventional prejudice and habit. With us the ardour is less great. The career towards which you aim with a zeal that carries you away comes naturally to young men. They take a secondary interest in their studies. A promenade in the Latin Quarter or visits to the cafés and wine-shops will soon convince one of the truth of this. You can see at a glance how suitable this is to the medical student. To be brief, the man accords to his calling—*métier*, as to all other things—the interest and time that belong to it, but he reserves to himself his personality; he is not monopolised by his profession. With women it is the contrary. They sacrifice all in their enthusiasm to science—their qualities, their capacities, their feebleness, their sensibilities and their affections. Listen—at my first autopsy, when my scalpel had pierced the thorax of the corpse, there was the sound of a thud on the slabs. It was your Gueméné, who had lost consciousness and collapsed like a rag. Many of my fellow students have confessed to the same weakness, and there are very few students who behold for the first time the dismembered body of a human being spread on the

dissecting table, like a butcher's carcass, without experiencing feelings of the most profound horror and disgust. Thank God, that feeling soon passes. I have seen you, when you made your first dissection, dismember and disembowel the subject, with a hand that was sure and steady and a face that never lost a shade of colour, and when I put the question to you, Are you not nervous? you replied proudly, that you never faltered before the dead or felt a qualm over the most repulsive subject. It is the same with the other female students. They evince surprising abnormal pluck in the presence of that butchery of death played out on the hospital stage of the amphitheatre, the women with their nervous tendencies, their sensibilities infinitely more delicate than those of the men support the horrible scene with the utmost composure. They forget all physical repugnance before those malodorous shambles in their desire to see and to know the secrets of medical science. They are unsexed in their ambition to become doctors. Are you astonished, Thérèse, that I revolt at the idea of my future wife being exposed to such horrible, unwomanly work, that I dread the influence of that deformed craving which sullies by an inordinate curiosity and passion for the indecency of science, the purity of your beautiful woman soul?"

Mademoiselle Herlinge listened thoughtfully, and when he paused replied sadly:

"All that did not prevent you from loving me, Gueméné."

He replied:

"I wish my wife to give me all of her love, her life. I wish her to be my friend and counsellor; to be all and everything to me, Thérèse. The old-fashioned marriages are the best, the truest, the most natural. All those customs and interests that take a wife outside the home are bad. It is not good to replace the old theory of married

life by a sort of connubial trades union according to the up-to-date formula."

She interrupted this speech with a warmth that betrayed how deeply his words went home:

"That formula is to me extremely wise and good, Gueméné. The association of two beings on equal footing, at the same time lovers and friends, remedies, by a knowledge of the identical functions of man and woman, the mistakes in marriage that are derived from intellectual disproportion or inequality. Do you not find this theory commendable and useful? You do not, I think, deny the equality of man and woman?"

"Their equality—no, but their similarity. I do not say that women are inferior—I have found it quite different, and, notwithstanding that all your efforts to be the woman-doctor tends only to metamorphose you into young men in petticoats, you need, by your grace, your attitudes, your ideas, and with your science itself, the other essence of ourselves, our higher souls. In a thousand secret ways and inclinations you are different from that you would copy."

Mademoiselle Herlinge felt an undercurrent of indignation that disturbed and upset her confidence. She had the most exquisite scrupulousness in her toilet: one could perceive under the hospital blouse the severe yet elegant bodice of grey silk, which removed her from all suspicion of masculine taste in her dress. She denied the superiority of man even in the matter of dress, but at the same time she felt obscurely the direct and precise quality of man's power of thought, his stronger, firmer will, and the audacity of his conceptions. It was thus, no doubt, how the matter appeared to Gueméné. The sexes were equal intellectually and morally, but to man he attributed the faculties of a higher order and the greater genius. In the woman he

recognised the superiority of sentiment and effectiveness, but when he spoke of "young men in petticoats," as he described the women-students, he was none the less unjust. Then she spoke aloud.

"We are not little boarding-school girls," she said succinctly.

"You have not less the eternal rights of women," he continued. "The grand vocation of womanhood animates you just the same, be you innocent young girls or learned young women. You have the same blood, the same devotion, the same tender instincts, Thérèse. Nature made you women before you chose to be doctors!"

"Ah! how well you have caught the narrow views of your Breton race, how deeply imbibed their insupportable respect for routine, my poor Gueméné. This is what they expect of women—to keep the pot boiling, to sew, to bolt the door, and keep watch over the house. But, tell me, what would you do with the innumerable army of girls without dot, walled up in the homes from which you will not permit them to escape, although you know well that without a dot they cannot find husbands? They die of hunger and neglect, very happily, thanks to your beautiful theories!"

"My theory is not cruel to women, Thérèse. It is not intended to belittle or abuse them. With all my heart I applaud the efforts of those girls who, poor, wretched, abandoned, in the midst of extraordinary difficulties, with incessant work, wrestle magnificently to achieve, notwithstanding their weakness, a place in the world, despite the men who neglect and persecute them. Ah! we have seen them, you and me, at the hospital classes, the girl-students in boatmen-cap, worn skirts and the hollow eyes of half-starved beings, their fingers thin as slate-pencils. Their misery—one well-

known to us is the little Russian outdoor student, Dina Skaroff. Is she not admirable with her patched boots, her eternal woollen robe, her work of the charnel-house? She has told us that the autopsy is her passion. She has applied herself in the spirit of a dreamer. She passed the nights over her books; and it was for that reason that she gained her exam. the first year. You believe that I do not appreciate her real value: a woman of that stamp, without a sou, timid, a stranger, who has hewn for herself a career in the midst of such a life of difficulties? Yet, if I am not mistaken, such ferocious labour does not overcome a young girl's vivid and passionate imagination, or destroy her cuirass of indifference and freedom in order to expand into a complete woman. The day when the necessity of gaining her own living disappears, she will develop into a loving wife and mother like the others. That, Thérèse, is the way I regard the women-doctors. Certainly, I find it not unseemly when men refuse to become the husbands of women who exercise the same profession, but, if by chance they marry, then all falls into its natural order of things: the man supports the home and family and the wife abandons everything for her sovereign right —her true function, which is to live for her husband and her children."

He looked at Thérèse and cried:

"I revolt you, do I not?"

The young girl was very pale.

"No," she replied softly; "you love me selfishly, like all men. You ask me very simply to sacrifice myself to you, to immolate on the altar of your love all I love and all I am!"

She stretched forth her hand and extinguished the gas-jet, the apparatus ceased to hum, there was a strange silence. The sunlight struck the specimens of human

cadavre, an embryo like a big bean was illuminated in the alcohol where it floated. Thérèse repeated in a voice, the sadness whereof she strove to render natural :

" I can never do what you ask ? "

Gueméné, without speaking, made a gesture of despair.

" I must follow my career ; I cannot be parted from it," she said resignedly. " I shall lose myself in it ! "

" I will endeavour to forget you, then," said Gueméné.

He pulled himself together with the laborious effort of one struggling under a load of disappointment. She was astonished and wounded by his reply. As the daughter of the great Dr. Herlinge, she as yet knew nothing but the bright side of life. Heretofore it had been one continual triumph and success. She would accept no half love. The beautiful passion, at once so poetical and romantic, of which she was the object, had intoxicated her with a new and strange happiness. It was but natural that a young girl full of the vigour and independence of a life sheltered and pampered in every sense, should wish to enjoy a love where her pride had nothing to lose. But when her career was the price demanded in exchange for a husband and a home, all her being revolted. Heart and soul quivered under the pain and vexation inflicted upon her by the unjust demand of her lover.

" Forget me, dear friend," she said, in a voice that was low and unsteady. " It is for the best ! "

Gueméné appeared not to hear her. A deep sigh escaped him. He looked at her with the dull eyes of one who suffers.

" Then—it is finished ? "

Seeing the torture of her comrade, her lover, the heart within Thérèse was touched. She recalled the sweet familiarity of their student days. She beheld him in the clear light of that equal comradeship ; she apprised at

their true value his many noble qualities, his justness, exactitude, reasonable intelligence, and the dignity in which he veiled the dreamy mysticism of the Breton. She was pierced with an instinctive regret that she should lose, let escape her, the love of such a man. In that moment she considered the possibility of making a supreme act of abnegation. She saw herself deprived of the numerous benefits, the éclat, the power that her profession of Doctor would bring her. She beheld herself an insignificant housewife, humble and obedient, one of the common flood of women drifting into the obscure waters of matrimony and lost to all that she had so successfully striven to attain ; but she would be free to belong without reserve to a man—and that man was the man now trembling with love before her. As she hesitated Gueméné raised his head and murmured :

" Adieu, Thérèse ! "

Then it was decided ; he was going. The love of which she thought nothing yesterday had appeared to-day before her, a loving, deep, God-like love. It had surprised and shaken her, charmed her, held her, and then vanished. Her former life would begin again in all its sameness—its serenity and loneliness. She felt like one suddenly awakened from a delightful dream to a hard and bitter reality. Yet, Gueméné was still there ; she had only to say one word and a life of love was before her by his side. She would know that sweet, mysterious evolution that she had observed in many wives, the meaning of which she had, despite her lucid and superior intelligence, failed to understand. She had, with all her knowledge of science, remained in the clouds, like any simple girl, pure in her childlike ignorance of the great secrets of the heart. She thought :

" How happy I would be ! "

Then she heard the young man cry in trembling tones:

"If you had said Yes, Thérèse, you would be mine. I could leave this little room the possessor of a great happiness. A woman, noble, beautiful, and famous as you are, would belong to me. I could return to my home rejoicing in the certitude that one day you would share that home with me. I would love you to distraction. I could take you in my arms and press you to my heart with the kiss of betrothal—for I would have the right; yes, I would have the right to——"

"Silence!"

Thérèse interrupted him abruptly. She was terrified before the exaltation that carried the young man out of himself and made his voice ring with a passion that vibrated round her.

"Silence! That glass door encloses the room of the sisters; they are there and may hear you."

He paid no heed to her precautions, but poured out a torrent of words from the pent-up love in his heart:

"For eight months I have weighed, examined, scrutinised my love in the solitude of my home. I have closed myself in, seen no one, and nourished it in secret as a beast of the forest feeds on its precious booty. Sleeping, I have seen you in my dreams; waking, I have seen you better still. You have been my hallucination. I have no thought but for you, and I work only for you. I have peopled my home with visions of you a thousand times repeated. I have suffered. I have wept. I have held forth my arms for you, day and night, passionately. And to-day, when I see you before me, I adore you. I have the right to take you in my arms—to press you to me; but, no—no—no. It is No!"

Pale, trembling, with clenched hands, he emphasised by nervous blows of his heels on the floor the force of his

infrangible will. The indomitable bluntness of his race enveloped him like a cyclone, that carried him beyond reason and control. Thérèse, white and dejected, regretted the womanly pity and impulse that had softened her rejection of this masterful man. They were both formed to make a perfect union, both handsome, and possessing qualities that harmonised graciously. Nature and youth pleaded insidiously for the union, but between them the demon of pride insinuated its invincible obstacle.

Thérèse held forth her hand.

"Adieu, Gueméné . . . but it is your wish that parts us!"

"Ah!" he cried. "Thank me for having the strength to go. I know the many miseries that await us in that equivocal union, where you would be only half my wife, where my jealousy would rend your heart, where your time and freedom would belong to your profession, where I would be the slave of a love unsatisfied and tenderness that would recoil upon myself. I suffer much, I will suffer more. But I am more prepared to weep over my love intact than to kill it by degrees."

"You cannot understand, Gueméné; for I myself did not understand before to-day what my profession, my career, means to me. It will not permit me. I cannot renounce it; I cannot! What is the common-place existence to which you invite me compared with the unique achievements of science, the daily excitement of a physician's life: the silent battles with disease, the long, slow, passionate wrestling with death, the incessant probing of the mysteries of life, the wonderful spectacles of inexhaustible physiology! . . . No one can ever know what I experience those days when I enter the hospital and find in my ward a new patient, and when I feel the living problem of that body, with its concealed disease, that

I must unravel, ascertain, master, and overcome! Oh! Gueméné, Gueméné, you do not know as I do the sombre apprehension of the diagnosis, and the pleasure of the auscultation, and the triumph, the exultation to find your surmises true and verified. And what powers we proclaim! to read thus the invisible, the obscure organs of the body, read morally, by deductions, and see in the living body better than in the autopsy. . . . And the autopsy! What a marvel, with its revelations that confirm the hypotheses built on some mysterious case! Often, believe me, I have shuddered during a difficult auscultation, in the presence of secrets, that the living body would let slip my observation. Then, when I perform the autopsy and lay bare the viscera, illuminating that which was obscure, and removing my uncertainty; yes, I have many times desired feverishly to make the autopsy, when I may learn the secrets of the flesh under my hands and seize the proof of my diagnosis by the aid of the scalpel. I have longed for it with impatience and curiosity, as a little child longs to rip her doll to pieces. Sometimes the patients would defeat all my premisses and treatment, and recover; then they would carry off their bodies without my having discovered anything. But the dissection.—Ah! that never failed me. Yes, Gueméné, those have been beautiful hours in my life!"

He listened to that chant, ardent and vibrating with enthusiasm, that hymn of physiology, almost indecent in its inhumanity, with a feeling akin to horror. He had believed in the tender, womanly devotion for her art in the girl before him. He had believed in the fitness of women to nurse and heal; her merciful pity, her refinement, her modesty and delicacy rendered her necessary for the lack of those traits in the masculine element of the

science of medicine and surgery. These were to him the only right, the only justification by which a woman might practise as a doctor, and now, in the presence of the revelations of Thérèse, who had in her enthusiasm laid bare her most secret experiences, he found himself regretting the dream of his student days. Where were those angels of mercy in white cap and apron? He found, on the contrary, that those frail, sweet creatures could be perfect demons of science, merciless, cruel in their thirst to probe the mysteries of the poor, disease-wracked human body.

"I have that one noble, uncontrollable passion, my profession; to know and to heal humanity," cried Thérèse in conclusion. "You ask me to abandon it! I would commit a crime in doing so that would bring its own punishment."

As her words echoed in the silence of the little laboratory, a hubbub arose from the stairway without: there was the sound of many footsteps and voices. Thérèse drew up the curtain of the glass door and looked through it.

"My father is coming," she said quietly.

Doctor Herlinge slowly ascended the stairway. He wore the black skull-cap and the white blouse and apron of the demonstrating professor. Behind him pressed a mass of students, doctors, and professors, young and old—a mixed throng of Parisians and provincials. Some were well, even fashionably clothed, others poor and shabbily dressed. Among them one could see many women. They had assembled to follow the Wednesday clinic of the celebrated doctor. It was a glorious class. The Master, with an air weary and detached, was dragging his steps slowly up, followed by the crowd of people eager to listen to his demonstrations. He was small and slender. In his emaciated face, the colour of parchment, glowed with veiled ardour the eyes of pale blue—strange eyes for a

Frenchman. The grey hair escaped in long locks from the black velvet cap. The sister of charity on duty went before him to open the doors of the lecture-hall.

Thérèse, after giving Gueméné a cold and furtive pressure of the hand, left the laboratory and glided among the groups of men silently entering the hall. She had to present to her father the observations she had written on three new patients. She found it difficult to reach him. Presently the crowd made way and let her pass on, seeing that the young girl was the Master's daughter. Her face was as white as her hospital robe, while dark rings under the bright eyes testified to the strain of the scene through which she had just passed in the laboratory. Gueméné had slipped away and descended the stairway. He met a young girl, poorly clad, who leaned on the hand-rail as she ascended the stairs. She wore a straw hat quite bare of trimming, under which her eyes of extraordinary beauty shone like stars. The shadow of the hat completely concealed her forehead.

"Good-day, Mademoiselle Skaroff," said the young man.

She held out her ungloved hand in greeting.

"Good-day! Are you not coming to hear Herlinge to-day?"

He answered without stopping:

"No; I am engaged in the cité."

She continued her way towards the second storey, impatient to join the throng that assembled to hear Herlinge, the celebrated Doctor, discourse in his brilliant manner and expound his theories of medicine to his fascinated class. Poor and ambitious as she was, she was filled with the obstinate determination to succeed, and she did not wish to lose a word of the wisdom that flowed from the lips of the Master.

II

THERE was from the very first an unconscious grudge, an insidious bitterness in the grief and disappointment of the young man, that kept his resentment alive. Moreover, he was much occupied. His mornings were passed in visits to the denizens of the rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Ile. The crowded dwellings were veritable nests of disease bred by heart-troubles, laryngitis, catarrhs, and rheumatism. At times he was also called to minister to the ills of the higher classes, the rich people inhabiting the quiet, exclusive mansions with their antique façades and Louis XV. balconies along the shadowy quays encircling the Ile St.-Louis in a classic and noble ceinture. The young doctor with the intelligent and thoughtful air had quickly won popularity. He devoted the afternoons to consultations. The brass plate on the door announced that he was receiving from three o'clock till five. Then the wives of the workmen or the shopkeepers of the quarter came to consult him at three francs a visit, each patient placing the three pieces of silver on the top of the mahogany bureau when leaving the consulting-room. As soon as the little *salon d'attente* was empty, he went out again, after taking down the names of the sick in his visiting-book. Sometimes he would be called to the right side of the river, the quay Celestius or to the quarter of the Bastile.

He returned late, in a hired cab, exhausted and hungry,

taking his dinner at one o'clock in the morning. It was then that the image of Thérèse Herlinge appeared to take possession of him. He had so long imagined her presence in the little home, that he could not abandon his dream of happiness born of his chaste and reverent love. He could not conceive that place without her. One evening, by the faint light of the gas left burning for his return by the old servant, he fancied he perceived Thérèse's slight form and the glossy tresses of her black chignon on the landing of the first floor. He was immediately seized by a fit of giddiness that almost overcame him, but he managed to gain his chamber. There he was prostrated by an attack of shivering that left him on the verge of a strange fever. In the night he was awakened suddenly. He imagined he heard the voice of Mademoiselle Herlinge. A cold perspiration covered him. Then he forced himself to sleep again, bringing all his will to banish thoughts of the young girl; but he was again brought back by the sensation of a woman's hand placed on the nape of his neck. He recognised this hand by the cold touch of the gold ring on the first finger of the right hand of Thérèse.

Presently this obsession began to invade his work. He became the prey of these ardent and troublesome illusions during his consultations. The door of the waiting-room adjoining his cabinet could not open to admit a new arrival without his fancying that the step was that of Mademoiselle Herlinge. The idea came to him that this was the ghost of her decision come to persuade him that she would abdicate her profession, give up all for him. It haunted him constantly. Then he imagined how easy it would be for her, imbued with this liberty of her student life, to dare that step with delicacy and dignity—to come to him, to surprise him, and to bring him her promise and restore to him his lost happiness.

He awaited her perpetually—without weariness, without reflection; but when he went into the waiting-room to call his patients one after the other into his cabinet, and looked round the room, he experienced each time a fresh disappointment in not finding Thérèse there.

. . . . .

One day, when passing along the quai aux Fleurs, he perceived her in the distance. The pavements were encumbered with geraniums, begonias, and the queen Marguerites of summer. It was more like a picture of many colours stretched along the parapet. And there at the end was the slender, black silhouette of Thérèse, stopping in her walk and bending towards a square of bright-red colours, that caught the light vividly from a mass of geraniums in pots on the ground.

Gueméné, without thinking, hastened his steps towards her. Once more under the guise of that woman happiness appeared before him. He was moved by the unconscious impulse of love, and formed the desperate resolution to speak to her at once; to plead his love humbly with the proud student. As he approached she turned her head quickly and seeing him, exclaimed cordially:

"Gueméné!"

Her smile of welcome reassured the young man. He was overcome by emotion, and stammered incoherent words as he pressed her hand.

"What!" she cried, surprised. "You wish to speak seriously to me, here? We cannot, Gueméné. It is impossible." She smiled still, that gentle, affectionate smile that gave to every word a captivating tone.

"Yes," he urged. "We can speak here. I will be brief. I wish to tell you how much I have suffered since last we met, that I have sought to find the way out of this unhappy dilemma. I must tell you all immediately,

here—and receive the answer that will perhaps make you mine, Thérèse."

There was so much passion in his voice and eyes that, notwithstanding her calm, Thérèse was obliged to look away: she could not bear that burning glance unmoved. She saw the asphalt of the silent, deserted quay, blinding white in the sun. No one passed at that late hour of the morning, the time devoted to the midday déjeuner. There was no traffic to disturb the peace by its busy sounds. The mingled odour of the violets and geraniums saturated the warm air. The extreme end of the buildings of the Hospital Hôtel-Dieu finished here in gloomy walls like those of a prison.

"I will hear what you have to say," answered Thérèse coldly.

At the bottom of her heart she cherished a secret hope for a reconciliation that was created by her unconscious desire to be loved; she wished for some possible understanding between them that would cede to her the practice of her profession and the possession of his love. This overture of Gueméné to-day seemed to her the first concession. Her eyes brightened with curiosity to know how he would bring it about.

"I have thought," began the young man very humbly, "that I was mad to expect such a sacrifice from you when I spoke the other day. A woman such as you are cannot abandon her career. Your superior intellectual gifts place you above the frivolous life of the ordinary woman; but it seems equally clear to me that the daily worry and strain of the irregular life of a doctor would rob you of much of the happiness you are so fitted to enjoy. There is another course equally dignified for you and your brilliant capacities, and that is the woman of science who, without quitting her home or the rôle

she plays, can work independently, giving full scope to the activity of her intellect in her cabinet with her books, and in the laboratory with her experiments, and thus carry out her dream of incessant study and research. Ah! Thérèse, I see you thus in the interior that we will make. How you will be the ideal new-woman, keeping the home, where you will divide your time between its care and your profound and discreet studies. You are the friend of Madame Lancelevée, the doctoress of the Presidence: you know her laboratory. You will have one also."

"A laboratory!" cried Thérèse, interrupting him in her indignation. "That is what you would offer me? No! my dream is the life of incomparable activity of the doctor, the daily contact with humanity; the little world, complete in itself, of patients, to whom I am at the same time the friend, the moral master, and the saviour; my field the battle of experience, and my *corps*, living beings, vibrating with suffering. My ambition is for the rôle of healer. I believe myself destined for the great mission of combating human misery. I am convinced that I have a sufficiency of energy for that life intense and fruitful, equalling the strength of ten other women. And I, to be bound by the four walls of the laboratory or the *Cabinet de travail*, among the bottles that feed the bacilli, the microscopic research for germs, the narrow views of chemistry and pathology in the guise of octavos bound in musty leather and ornamented with coloured text? No! You understand me very little, Gueméné, when you propose such a course for me—I must exercise my science in the practice of medicine and not by sterile studies. The hospital magnetises me; the sick attract me. I wish the true success, the real triumph of the doctor—the victory over death!"

During this discussion the two walked towards the Pont Notre-Dame. At that point both stopped. Thérèse was pale and trembling with the excitement of her enthusiastic defence of her theories. Gueméné was silent. A merchant of flowers approached them to offer his wares —pots of heliotropes, whose tufts of violet shed on the air a perfume that recalled the incense of the church. As Thérèse finished Gueméné spoke.

"Very well, that is sufficient. I will insist no longer. Adieu!"

"My poor Gueméné!" murmured Thérèse as she caught his hand and pressed it in an impulse of pity that hurt and offended the young man.

"Let me go," he said, addressing her again with an effort. "As for me. I shall endeavour to find sufficient energy to conquer my love."

She made a gesture as though she would detain him, but he bowed and, turning on his heel, retraced his steps rapidly in the direction of the Ile St.-Louis.

. . . . .

Sad news awaited him on his return to the little hotel in the Ile St.-Louis and came just in time to banish the dazed condition of his mind, that might have resulted in a serious collapse. The servant handed him a *petit bleu*. He opened the card and read the few words scarcely legible, written by a shaking hand:

"My dear Fernand,

"My poor loved one is no more. Come to me.

"Eugene Gueméné."

In the state of feverish sensitiveness and exasperation into which he had been thrown by the hard resistance to his love, the young man experienced, on receiving this

message, a sorrow that prostrated him for the moment. The Gueméné that sent the message was one of his uncles and, like himself, a doctor, who had practised at Châteaulin in Brittany until the desperate state of his wife's health compelled him to resign his career and come to Paris, in order to be near the great specialists for the disease from which she suffered. It was a sad ending to twelve years of marriage, in which both were incomparably happy in their mutual love. Fernand recalled their arrival at the Gare d'Orsay eight months previously; and the appearance of his uncle, still a young man, whose face was emaciated with sorrow, and whose eyes devoured with love his dear companion wasted by disease, who, despite the weakness induced by their journey, still affected a forced gaiety with incredible courage in order to delude her poor husband into the belief that she was not suffering.

She was a woman of forty years, and so captivating that one could not easily forget her. She suffered from an internal disease that altered her appearance lamentably and destroyed the beauty of her face; her hair was prematurely white, but the secret fire of the fever that consumed her, or perhaps the love that she gave in exchange for the passionate adoration of her husband, illumined with veritable splendour the sweetness of her large eyes of golden brown. Over those magnetic eyes rose a forehead superbly intelligent. The menace of death that seemed to prowl around her contributed to the spiritual prestige of the unwearying passion of love that she excited daily, more deeply, in the soul of her husband, despite the disease and the slow wasting of her beautiful body.

They were settled in an apartment in the boulevard St. Michel, opposite the Luxembourg. Fernand called frequently for news of the invalid. He assisted in the dangerous and delicate operation performed by Artout, the great

gynæcologist. Unfortunately, the operation proved futile and her state more grave than ever. Madame Gueméné received him always, although she grew daily more emaciated and weakened to the point of losing the power to speak. Still she remained cheerful, spiritual, and serene through compassion for her dear companion, who never left his place at the foot of her bed or removed the heart-broken gaze of his tear-filled eyes. She never alluded to the death that she knew was so near, but spoke only of literature and art. Her husband was forced to support the light, almost gay, tone of the conversation. It was pitiable to behold each playing for the other that comedy of security and forgetfulness of danger, when their souls were desolate with the knowledge of the separation that was to come.

The young man lived over in thought those visits, that had not been without influence on the sentimental side of his life. That passion so noble and sorrowful in a man fully eighteen years older than himself inspired Gueméné with a lofty ideal of love. He had envied that heroic love of his uncle, and it contributed not a little to the mystic exaltation of his infatuation for Mademoiselle Herlinge.

And now it was of that admirable creature so adored that he read: "My poor loved one is no more." Why had not that great love been powerful enough to keep its object? She had always appeared to him superior to the common law. It seemed that she could not be like other women; but it was true, for had not the unhappy lover himself traced those sad words?

Then Gueméné, remembering that cadaverous face with its beautiful, passionate eyes framed in the white embroideries of the pillow, the glossy hair flowing in waves over the temples, the flood of pale blue ribbons that adorned her breast, the valenciennes laces of the night-robe, and

the hand so transparent and delicate, raised in a familiar gesture of greeting, burst into tears and sobs to know that he loved Mademoiselle Herlinge with the same tender passion that the dear dead lady had inspired.

Overcoming the dread he had of witnessing the grief of the widower, he set out for the boulevard St. Michel. As he ascended the staircase, the double doors that belonged to the apartment of the Gueménés flew open, and he found himself face to face with a remarkably stout, pretty blond woman dressed in black. She flung up her arms in a gesture of dismay.

"I am distracted. I am overcome by this sad blow."

She shook hands warmly with the young man as she explained.

"My poor doctor, you will see a sight to break your heart. I have never seen anything so terrible as her suffering!"

"You did not expect the end so soon?" he asked.

"Yes; some five days there have been complications of the peritoneum, you understand. There was no mistaking the symptoms. After that, septicemia set in. Artout came yesterday in consultation, and confirmed my opinion that it was fatal. Ah, we found out at once that it was a condemned case from the very first, I am sorry to say!"

Then she shook hands vigorously with Gueméné as she finished, saying, in business-like tones:

"Pardon. I must be off. I am to assist Artout this morning in an operation. I am due in three quarters of an hour in the avenue Kleber. Ah! how kind Artout is to me!"

She turned from Gueméné and descended the staircases in haste; the heels of her heavy, squeaking boots stamped noisily down the uncarpeted steps. Her eyes shone with

a hard, bright glow of anticipation as she hurried to her appointment. He gazed after her with something of disgust in his glance. It pained him to see in that woman-doctor a confrère who was obliged, in order to support her four children, to resort to the dealings of a midwife, always dressed in her Sunday best, fussily aping the busy life of a doctor, always in need, and having more patients than there were hours in the day and night, and at the same time with a head stuffed like a bag with the contents of all the books on pathology, which she read from end to end, and from which she could quote without making a single error. She practised in a small *entresol* in the rue de Buci, where the patients could scarcely hear what she said owing to the loud noise and rumble of the omnibuses and carts in the roughly paved street. There she gave consultations at twenty sous a visit, upon which she and her family could scarcely subsist. But the great professor, Artout, her former master, helped her by his patronage and recommended her to many of his rich patients. He appreciated the precision of her memory, her docility to the technique and instruction that she derived from him, the almost mechanical exactitude and scrupulousness with which she carried out his directions. He had moulded her to his will so thoroughly that she could only think and see as he did, and for that reason he gave her a little of the confidence he had in himself; and he was not mistaken when he declared to his medical confrères, "Jeanne Adeline! Oh yes, she assists me very often in my operations. She is my left arm!"

And Gueméné, as he listened to the sound of her heavy boots growing fainter and fainter as she reached the last steps, sighed, and thought with sadness:

"That is the ideal of Thérèse!"

Then he rang the bell. The doors of the apartment

were immediately opened—it seemed to him dark as a tomb. The chamber of Madame Gueméné was at the end of the vestibule. He approached it and entered on tip-toe.

Two heavy silver candelabras, bearing lighted candles, stood on a table by the bed. The light revealed the form of the dead woman extended on the bed; the thin, waxen fingers were crossed on a crucifix. The air was full of the floating vapours of phenol. Beside the head of the bed, motionless, in an easy chair, his back turned to the door, was the form of a watcher of the dead. It was a man. He did not stir to see who had entered; but Fernand recognised his uncle in that figure bowed down with grief. At the first glance he saw clearly into the depths of that sorrow so silently endured.

With dry eyes, the body stiff, like one insensible, the two hands hanging, one on each side of the seat, he looked steadily on the face of his dead wife. He had been in that position for hours; from the moment when he began his sad vigil, the moment the last sigh bore away the soul of his beloved from the pain-racked body, his eyes had never left those sacred remains. It was only the sound of his laboured breathing that gave evidence of his consciousness.

The young man placed his hand gently upon the arm of the watcher. Then Eugène Gueméné started and recognised his nephew. Without opening his lips he gave a sign of greeting with the head, and then sank again into an attitude of fixed contemplation.

"My poor uncle, my poor uncle," murmured Fernand. Then, fascinated by the contemplation of death, he felt himself drawn into the vigil, and gazed on the still face. The long white tresses, that the husband had no doubt disarranged, fell in a mass at one side of the cold temples, gleaming like marble over the features upon which death had traced, with the black pencil of dissolution, his terrible

design. The nostrils were pinched into two dark spots in the mask that slowly effaced the beauty of that loved visage, like a portrait that is wiped out.

"What are you, beautiful *Tantine*?" thought the young man in an agony of regret. "Where have you gone? What is there in common between your charming being, with all its incomparable seduction, and this sad form that I see?"

And the other: he never wearied of gazing on that rigid statue, that had been animated with so much love, so much gaiety, so much soul, and that would soon carry off in the coffin all the tender reminiscences of caresses and kisses, the secret of an ecstasy of love that for twelve years filled him, the husband and lover, with the deep intoxication of a perfect marriage of body and soul. Fernand, like those who have never been bereft of that which was stronger than life, accepted already the reality of that death, and saw on the bed nothing more than the remains of his beloved aunt; but the poor lover, he waited obstinately to snatch some fleeting sign, some supernatural crisis that would bring back his lost one; waited, desperately hoping till the last moment.

Hypnotised by grief, ardent and mysterious, he devoured with his gaze that which would soon be lost to him for ever. He was a man elegant and refined; the grey hair, cut like a brush, fully revealed his noble forehead; the moustaches of brown were slightly silvered towards the pointed ends. It seemed that the supreme love that had filled his life, had stamped him with an air of sweetness and gravity, the air of a dreamer, that marked him as one living an intense life within himself.

His silence alarmed his nephew. Tears would have been less terrible than this coma. Fernand tried to rouse him.

"You suffer," said he timidly. He was moved by the

delicacy which the young experience who do not understand the fullness of another man's grief. He found it more easy to comfort the sorrows of his women patients, but he could not say to this wretched man, "Your grief has no words, you must weep."

"I don't suffer," murmured the mourner, without taking his eyes from the face of his dead love. "All that I have on earth is there before me. It is not possible for me to see what is passing about me, until after. . . ."

"Ah! poor, poor *Tantine*, why have you left us?" cried Fernand, suddenly overcome, and giving full vent to his pent-up emotion.

And shuddering with a clearer intuition of the hopeless, irrevocable nature of death, he cast himself across the bed, his face crushed in his hands, and gave vent to a spasm of weeping, while the husband repeated like one raving in the unconsciousness of a feverish dream, the disjointed sentences that expressed his loving pride in the dead.

"She was not only beautiful—my poor love; she was the light of my life; she was my sun of joy; she shed the light of her glorious soul upon all who approached her. But was she not the one woman in the world for me? Where could I find the woman to equal her? Never again. Thou hearest me? Never shall I find another who could be compared to her!"

He did not weep, but passionately regarded the dead; and she, that had never failed to respond with delight to the loving words of her husband, remained deaf and motionless in the terrible immobility of death.

He continued to murmur his litany of love: "She was more sweet still for the tortures she suffered, and I, who knew the most subtle secrets of her soul, was ignorant of all she bore. Oh! yes, she was sweet and brave to the last moment, when she smiled on me——"

He regarded her calmly and seemed to be speaking of her to an unseen listener.

"But for all that I see here, I have not the feeling to suffer. I cannot realise my misery."

The flow of passionate words revealed the state of the crisis of grief that overwhelmed him, and that by its very intensity formed the mental anæsthetic that deadened his suffering. Presently he ceased; a solemn silence reigned in the twilight of the death chamber; the candles burned slowly, their flames flared up in short vibrations; the flowers exhaled their heavy perfume. A fly buzzed somewhere unseen in its sinister roving. The two men sighed and mourned beside the dead, who so inexorably refused to communicate with the life around her. They heard also the light ticking of the clock as it measured, second by second, the hours in that melancholy presence. Fernand Gueméné suddenly experienced a feeling of uneasiness; he reproached himself for lingering so long a time during the supreme last *tête-à-tête* between those lovers. Certainly, it would have been inopportune and indiscreet to have intruded upon the holy intimacy of the first day of their union when they had become man and wife—the honeymoon time, when they realised joyously the radiant promises of happiness; and now, the last day had come, the hour of parting, with all that remained of vanished love and joy. He must not ravish one instant from that intimacy of death, that last sad interview of the living and the dead.

With steps light as a stealthy animal, he gained the door, and without making a sound opened it, and left the room. In the darkened vestibule he encountered the old servant, who had known him from a child. She stopped him as he passed.

"Oh! Monsieur Fernand, what a loss, what a loss!"

The tears coursed down the wrinkles of her worn face.

Her hair, arranged in the curious Quimper fashion, gave her head a grotesque resemblance to a horse, with the long muslin straps of the cap hanging like the reins of a bridle down the back. Her flat body and thin hips were incased in a sort of crinoline formed by the thousand gathers of her stiff petticoats. In her hand she carried a collection of medicine bottles, that hung by the necks between her four fingers.

"It is for my unhappy master that I fear now," she whispered. "I have thrown away all the drugs that might be dangerous—the poisons. Better to be on the safe side. When they carry off Madame, he may go mad. Holy Virgin! he is capable of killing himself, Monsieur Fernand. The good God would be merciful to take them both, better that than to separate two people who loved one another so much. A home like this is not found every day. A servant is the best judge of that—she sees and knows everything. I served them since the first day of their marriage. I brought Monsieur and Madame, with my own hands, the chocolate the morning after the wedding night. Ah! but they were a handsome couple. I did not look at my young mistress. I placed the tray with the *déjeuner* on the table near the bed and turned to go, but she called me to raise the blind, then had a little chat with me. I swear to you, Monsieur Fernand, that she was as fair and innocent-looking as a young girl that had just made her first communion. It was when she turned her sweet eyes on Monsieur that she blushed and smiled in a loving way; and how beautiful she was. Ah Holy Virgin! for ten years I served the hot water every morning when they rang, and made the fire. It was always the same, except that Madame's hair became grey and Monsieur was no longer embarrassed to kiss her pretty bare arms before me. They were always like new-married people on their honeymoon.

Then the misfortune of that terrible illness came, and there were two beds instead of one; but that did not change their love, as they many times declared to me. Monsieur Fernand, I have often found him on his knees before her. Think of that! on his knees before her, just the same as if she was the Blessed Holy Virgin. From morning until night he never took his eyes from her sweet face, and now, to think that it is all over—finished, oh! it cannot be true!"

Her tears redoubled, and she tried to speak between the sobs that choked her voice. "What can I do, a poor old stupid like me, if Monsieur tries to kill himself? I am not able to console him. I would speak to him of the mercy of God, but I do not dare."

"Don't be alarmed, Marianne," said the young man kindly. "Your master has more strength than you believe."

He was interrupted by the sound of hoarse moans coming from the death-chamber. The old servant clung to him in a fit of trembling. The moans broke into a lamentation, long and agonising, that finished in a cry.

"Go to him, Monsieur Fernand. Go to him," whispered the old servant in terror. "He may die." She pushed the young man towards the chamber, but he hesitated to enter. He could not help the misery that called for succour from on high. He felt that respect for the sacredness of sorrow prevented him from intruding on the loneliness of that chamber of death. Was not that man closed in beside the form of his dead wife? Had he not the right to weep out his sorrow alone, without the interference of any one? It was not decent to intrude.

"He has killed himself," wept the old servant. "That was his death cry."

Her words gave the young man a chill; it vanquished his feeling of delicacy. He made a few steps forward and

placed his fingers on the handle of the door; then he hesitated and listened. There was no further sound. Absolute silence reigned within. He knocked, but there was no response.

"My master, my master," cried Marianne in terror.

Then, resolutely advancing, she opened the door and looked into the room.

On the bed the smooth white coverings of the dead were drawn aside from the still rigid form. The fingers were clasped in the sculptured pose of prayer, but the waxen face was pressed to the grey hairs of the desolate husband, who, in his grief, had taken that beloved form in his embrace for the last time. He was weeping silently, still grasping the beautiful, rigid arms, with hands that trembled under the cold contact that convinced him his beloved was really dead.

Fernand Gueméné bowed before the sad spectacle, and reverently closed the door. The servant gathered up the bottles that she had let fall to the floor and fled weeping while he silently left the apartment.

Outside, the joyous mob of the boulevard whirled like a vortex of life around him. He saw the lofty black tramways speeding along under the green foliage of the trees; the *brasseries*, with their restaurants in the open air, where the men and women were enjoying their meals at the white tables. He saw the merry students strolling, talking, and gesticulating, probably discussing the best places to dine cheaply and well. The whole world seemed engrossed with the business of eating.

He thought of Thérèse Herlinge, triumphing in the power of her perfect health; her supple arms, her calm, beautiful eyes, with their fullness of soul and gaiety of heart. He thought of her words, so harmonious and serious.

Perhaps she was at that moment thinking of him and wishing to see him. . . . Ah ! death can take one in a day. Why should he be unhappy, when life so good, so precious was his ?

Thérèse could be his *fiancée*, to-morrow, this evening, this very hour, if he renounced the hard conditions he had proposed to her. He could take her in his arms, as his unhappy uncle had taken his beloved dead ; but in lieu of that cold body, that rigid statue, he would press to his heart the warm, gracious, noble form of that adorable girl.

" He cried like one dying," said the old servant of her master. Yes, one dying of the sweet sorrow of lost love. Had he not been for the past month an unhappy automaton, busy mechanically ? asked Gueméné. Ah, if things would continue thus, life would not be worth the living.

As he passed the bridge of the Archevêché, the Ile of St.-Louis appeared fresh and charming, like a long nave roofed in by the verdure of the trees, and at the end to the right he perceived the façade of his house, half-covered by the foliage of the poplars. The pigeons, white and grey, flew in and out of the branches that concealed their nests ; below, the waters of the Seine rippled and sang their soft song as they played with the battlements supporting the arches of the bridge ; a pleasure-boat glided, long and vibrant, without a sound, over the green waters. And Notre-Dame, posed magnificently in the freshness of the square, bathed in the golden light of the autumn evening, raised to the deep blue of the heavens her slender, stately spire, that seemed an aerial fountain, whose supporting buttresses, gushing between the pointed arches to fall again enormous, ever widening, like impetuous jets of mysterious water that had been hardened into stone through some miracle of old.

III

THÉRÈSE HERLINGE resolved to attend the interment of Madame Gueméné, in order to give Fernand a proof of her continued friendship. She considered the matter in the light of her position as a woman of intellect occupied with the great things of her profession, and it appeared to her but right to place friendship above a commonplace love-affair, therefore she resolved on not permitting any sentimental misunderstanding to come between them, to break their comradeship, simply because she had refused him her hand. She was unconscious of the fact that Gueméné had grown more sympathetic to her, and that she thought of him more frequently than of old.

The first view of that ideal of marriage had brought her so little happiness that she would have preferred to have never known it. For the first time in her tranquil life she was troubled by doubt and misgiving. She feared the possibility that she was playing with her destiny, that she was staking her happiness on a word; she dreaded to make a mistake in that speculation with Fate. Far from being annoyed by the persistent suit of Gueméné, she was flattered by his devotion, since it proved to her that she was for him the one and only woman in the world. But her pleasure was dampened by the regret that she could not love him sufficiently to grant the sacrifice he demanded.

The idea pursued her that she would finally yield to his wish; and always she repulsed the thought, only to find

it return, each time less humiliating, the buoyant heart within her pleading for that sweet submission of her liberty. That her abnegation would thus enhance the joy of her masterful husband seemed to make the sacrifice easier: it was not too great a price for happiness. Madame Herlinge, the mother of Thérèse, was a model wife, amiable, and always amenable to the wishes of her husband. She had never in all her life stepped out of her rôle of the devoted and considerate helpmate. Fashionable and accomplished, she presided with discreet grace over the grand dinners, which were a daily pleasure and distraction to the celebrated doctor, surrounded by brilliant guests, of whom he was the soul and life, whilst his handsome wife played gracefully her silent rôle of watchful hostess. Madame Herlinge was an aristocrat born in the Faubourg St.-Germain, but to please her husband she had gradually broken away from the social obligations due to her family to devote all her time and care to the concoction of those famous dinners and receptions in the avenue Victor Hugo, where Thérèse had met the most distinguished confrères of Herlinge. Her mother also loved the theatre, which the doctor detested. She was nevertheless always smiling and affable, while her husband was often morose and cross-grained. He spoke much, she not at all; she was slowly extinguished beside him as the flame of a feeble lamp is absorbed in the power and brilliant blaze of a fire. And Thérèse, observing this effacement of the brilliant qualities of Madame Herlinge, cared little to imitate the abnegation of her mother, as a wife, in the rôle of domestic helpmate.

Thérèse had developed very young. At the age of fifteen she was deeply interested in the discussions on science or philosophy that she heard at her father's table. She read during her own meals, forgetting to eat in her thirst for knowledge. The influence of her father's guests on her

young mind was very strong, according to the age or fame of the diners. They did not curb the expression of their views or spare a word to gloss over facts too delicate for a young girl to hear. She was so quiet in her place at table, and withal so young, that the company overlooked her presence, despite her pretty face and bright eyes. This secretly annoyed her. She saw that they were under the impression, that, like her mother, she was eclipsed by the powerful personality of the great man who had honoured her by bringing her into existence. But now and then Thérèse launched a witty *mot* that revealed her right to a small share in the distinction of her father. Her strong, young character resented the slight put on her intellect, and through the throes of her wounded pride was born her vocation. She dreamed of becoming another woman than Madame Herlinge. She believed that she was already her superior, but she wanted some title or diploma that would convince the others. When she declared her intention to prepare for a degree her father was charmed and delighted with the ambition of his daughter, and encouraged her to become a matriculant. She then began to rouse in the learned set of her father something of the attraction and curiosity excited by the *femme savante* of the day. When she obtained her diploma she declared her intention to study medicine. In this step she was opposed by her parents, and more strongly by her father, for the reason that the glory of his name and prestige as a celebrated man of science would be diminished by the pretensions of a girl of eighteen years. It savoured too much of the ridiculous. Like many men who think the home the happier where the wife is but a reflection of themselves, this discreet wife pleased him and satisfied his *amour propre* in being so different to the type most praised by the would-be doctoress. The doctor did not

approve of this family war, still less that she should stick to her guns, as he declared, when he could not prevail on Thérèse to give up the idea.

During eighteen months she fought for her cause, desperately at times, with the big volumes on pathology that she abstracted secretly from her father's bookshelves. She acquired thus a general notion of medicine, but vague and incomplete, that was far from satisfying her curiosity, but it gave an impetus to her desire for knowledge. Books appeared useless; she craved the living book of the suffering body. It was the hospital that called her with an irresistible voice. There she would find what she sought. When her father returned from the Hôtel-Dieu, his hands and clothing impregnated with the horrible odour of iodoform, she inhaled the air around him with the same pleasure that another girl would inhale some rare perfume, with closed eyes and distended nostrils. She would seek herself the explanation of the cases he had operated on. She gradually grew to know the hospital in fancy, and without ever having seen the Herlinge ward, its arrangement, its sisters-in-charge, its house-surgeons, dressers, the beds, the number of patients, the cured and the dead. She could not pass the street wherein some hospital loomed up behind its grey walls without feeling her whole body tremble with the desire to enter. The sight of the Geneva Cross, the red emblem of the infirmary, doctor, and nurse moved her in the same manner. Her parents sought to overcome her enthusiasm and determination by wisely pointing out to her the uselessness of all her study—the wasted time and energy she expended on a mere fad.

"If it was necessary for you to gain your own living, it would be reasonable enough," they urged.

Their opposition made the forbidden thing all the more desirable.

Her life as a rich heiress rolled monotonously. The sameness of it desperately bored her. The visits with her mother to the *modiste*, the dressmakers, and the shops became intolerable to her. Madame Herlinge was "At Home" on each Tuesday. Thérèse assisted her on those days to receive the throng of fashionable women with smiles and meaningless phrases, to offer them tea and cakes while they exchanged gossip in which she felt not the slightest interest. Ah! how she longed to be some poor student whose merit would give her distinction, instead of being merely an elegant society girl, a prisoner in her own charming drawing-room! Above all, she detested the society women. She liked the dinners given to his confrères by her father; she enjoyed the odour of his cigars, the liquors, the learned conversation, the discussion of rare medical cases carried on under the inspiring intimacy of the after-dinner chats. She burned to share those controversies, to shine, to display her wit, but she was not permitted to mingle in the conversations; and the courtesy of the old *savants*, who disdained her intelligence, how it exasperated her!

Her life became so unsupportable that she grew ill—a sort of mysterious decline seized upon her. Her father auscultated her and gave her wine-tonics. Then Artout, the celebrated confrère of Herlinge, was called in to treat her. To him she confided her desire to become a doctor. The parents plotted with Artout to give an unfavourable opinion on the extravagant fancy of their daughter, but he reflected, and then declared:

"Let her take her P.C.N. and we will see what comes after!"

So it was decided. The course of seeming studies was thrust aside. They did not wish her to continue her obstinate poring over books which gave her *migraine*.

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She was given a laboratory, in the hope that a course of experiments would prove interesting and not too confining. This released her from the boredom of her mother's Tuesdays. She devoted all her time to the work in the laboratory. In retaliation, the doctors at the dinners of her father were careful to consider her position as a young girl, yet, without saying a word, she felt with those gentlemen an affinity, an *esprit de corps* that delighted her. They were the elders, while she was the young confrère, the new star that had risen, and of which they were ignorant. Perhaps that star would become a glorious light to Science. Then the world of Paris would say "Madame Herlinge," as they said "Artout," or "Boussard." She would become so distinguished that the doctors of celebrity who to-day considered her only an agreeable young girl with a pretty face, would then discuss with her and recognise her right to the higher intellectual life of a celebrated woman-doctor.

Presently, her stage was the Hôtel-Dieu, in the same ward where she was now the doctor and famous house-surgeon. Then she was outdoor surgeon at the Charity Hospital, where she met Gueméné for the first time. After the student classes, where her record had been very good, she trained at the Children's Hospital, where Gueméné followed her, and tended in a neighbouring ward; then, at the end of two years, they finished at the hospital together in the rue de Sèvres: Gueméné started a practice in the Ile St.-Louis, while she entered the service of her father at the Hôtel-Dieu. Amid all this success, notwithstanding the admiration bestowed upon her by the coterie of savants who frequented the dinners of the avenue Victor Hugo, Thérèse Herlinge remained simple and good. She was the joy of the house. She had become the pride of her parents. Herlinge, influenced by the example of

his daughter, recognised now the right of women to become doctors and practise medicine. He admitted the consultations with Madame Lancelevée, the Doctoress *de la Présidence*, and also those of Jeanne Adeline, so touching in her life of devotion divided between her patients and the home-nest, with its brood of young children. Thérèse adored and admired her father, but her tenderness was for her mother, whom she cherished and loved the best. The two women were as unlike in mind and ability as they were alike in personal appearance. Thérèse played the rôle of indulgent protector to Madame Herlinge, who effaced herself more and more in the home, through her adoration for those two illustrious beings, her husband and her daughter. She dreamed only of inventing fresh courses for the daily dinners, of shopping, her visits, and never failed to occupy herself with the gowns of Thérèse, superintending her maid, and leaving nothing undone that would enhance the elegant and fashionable attire of her daughter. The receptions flourished, and the dinners of the Professor became famous in the medical world. Madame Herlinge employed only three servants, but she kept a watchful eye on them, even to the length of superintending the kitchen and the work of the cook. She was happy on making the domestic wheels run smoothly, peacefully, and regularly. In that she was supremely content. Thérèse, with the careless selfishness of a pampered child, did not appreciate her at her real value, but always spoke of her as "the poor mamma," until the avowal of Gueméné came to trouble her peace of mind. Then she turned to her mother for consolation and advice, and confided to her the romance that had entered her life; but she said nothing to her father. She feared to disappoint his hopes built on her extraordinary success as a woman of Science, and also

to grieve him by a marriage that might separate them. Madame Herlinge had approved of her daughter's refusal of Gueméné, but for reasons that had not inspired Thérèse : there was, in her eyes, too great a difference between a Herlinge and the unknown. Gueméné, simply doctor of a quarter, for his daughter to contemplate such a union. There was the celebrated Madame Lancelevée, who had refused all offers of marriage in order to consecrate herself to her art, and it did not appear illogical to Madame Herlinge that Thérèse should follow the example of the great doctoress.

Thus, everything assisted in quenching the fire of love that Gueméné's passion had set alight in the heart of the young girl. Then, outside the maternal assent, circumstances arose that plunged her more strongly than ever into the intricacies of her profession. Four new cases were sent to her ward that interested her most particularly as illustrations of her studies on diseases of the heart. One who had a double lesion of the mitral valve that she had diagnosed immediately, merely by the aspect of the patient, a young woman with face distracted by the terrible expression of the agony she endured; two infectious cases; and still a fourth case, of an old woman with a heart trouble so complicated that Herlinge himself, with all his delicate and intimate knowledge of investigating the organic alterations of the heart, was perplexed.

The first and last cases aroused Thérèse's most passionate interest. The morning after the visit, she returned to the bed of the patient, stethoscope in hand, and, unfastening the bedgown, laid bare the bosom, where the deformed breasts hung like two folds of flabby flesh. She pushed the left breast to the right, and applied to the white chest the black disc of her apparatus. For many minutes,

with ear applied to the opening of the stethoscope, she auscultated the heart. On the long tables in the centre of the ward assistants were analysing the medical specimens from the patients. The sisters reprimanded the ward-attendants. The students of pharmacy made their rounds from bed to bed, verifying the phials of drugs. The nurse-on-probation arrived, pushing before her the rolling table containing the dishes of bouillon soup garnished with pieces of boiled horse-flesh. . . . Thérèse saw nothing of all this, but obstinately listened to trace the contradictory beating of that mysterious heart, torn and deformed, obstructing the circulation by the feebleness of the organ half-destroyed, yet still living. In the afternoon she returned to the bed of her old patient, to persist mercilessly in feeling about, auscultating, and probing the poor woman, who let escape many sighs of distress and weariness. Thérèse passed the stethoscope on the left side for the fifth time, and applied her ear, then she arose and re-covered the patient, and went away, neither having exchanged a word during the examination.

But when the house-surgeon penetrated her laboratory, remembrances of Fernand Gueméné haunted her anew. She could again see him in the little chamber, breathless with passion and love, declaring with tenderness the sweet things that disturbed yet touched her heart. She could see him on the quay of Fleurs offering a last concession, and she thought over the programme of that life that he had proposed to her—to continue her studies and carry out the half of the career that she had planned for herself, in a word, to follow her profession by the side of that man, so good, to give all up for love, to be loved, and at the same time to remain a woman of Science.

. . . . .

The morning when Herlinge made the clinic visit to

the old patient was a triumph for Thérèse. The diagnosis of the Master revealed the case to be myocarditis without injury to the heart-valves. Thérèse produced her observations and proved that they tallied exactly with those of her father. There were twenty-five or thirty doctors who had come to assist in the lessons of the Master, and among them was the Doctoress Lancelevée, very pale under her bands of black hair and the heavy eyebrows. Her morning gown was simple, but cut in the latest fashion: she asked to sound the patient's heart. Thérèse handed her the stethoscope. The students surrounded the bed, while the doctors in their black coats pressed near the foot in close attention to the examination. The sister on duty at the neighbouring bed was completely hidden by that absorbed crowd. Doctor Herlinge, with one hand thrust into the band of his white apron, the black cap pushed forward over his thick grey hair, the eyes flashing like steel behind his spectacles, described in brief phrases the anatomical deformation of the disordered heart of the old patient.

The reverent silence of the crowd hanging upon the words of the Professor was suddenly interrupted harshly by a sound of footsteps in heavy boots. Every head turned towards the door to see who was the rash intruder. They beheld the little girl-student, Dina Skaroff, advancing slowly as she buttoned up her blouse. Herlinge ceased speaking, and fixed on her his sharp, severe glance. He disapproved of any tardiness on the part of the students and liked to see them all assembled before beginning the demonstrations. The poor girl blushed furiously under his angry gaze. He continued his discourse, but, chafing under the interruption of the delinquent student, suddenly addressed her.

"Mademoiselle Skaroff, tell me what sounds you hear

there," he commanded, indicating the patient by a gesture of his head.

Dina blushed anew to be thus interrogated before the class and the crowd of doctors. Madame Lancelevée passed the stethoscope to her. The poor young girl applied the tube to the old patient's breast and listened, but her ears were deadened by the sound of her own heart, that palpitated more rapidly than that of the case before her. Frightened and deeply embarrassed, she said timidly:

"I hear too many heart pulsations! a breathing in the extra-cardiac!"

"Very good; you are quite right!" cried Herlinge with an ironical laugh. "Too many heart pulsations. I would advise you, Mademoiselle, to practise your auscultation a little more!"

He desired to punish her for her tardiness by a humiliating test before the whole clinic, and he succeeded. She turned from the side of the bed pale and embarrassed, her eyes shining suspiciously; she was wounded in her pride and felt alone in that crowd of men. Her heart swelled with the desire to weep out her mortification like a naughty child.

"My dear master," interposed a young doctor, boldly, "there is pulsation in the extra-cardiac. I perceived it yesterday—very distinctly."

He was tall and fair; a long silky moustache adorned his handsome face. His eyes wavered behind the spectacles in the excitement of defying the Master. All were astonished at his boldness in butting his head against the great Herlinge. Drawing his slight form to its utmost height, the Master glared up at him as he said:

"*Sacré bleu*, my friend; I wish very much to know if it is the sound of a gallop that you call extra-cardiac!"

A discussion began, dry and subtle, between the famous

savant and the young doctor, who bravely held to his assertions. Dina Skaroff gazed upon him in shy admiration. She felt grateful for his defence; she had not known him long, as he had only joined the clinic of Herlinge lately, where she saw him for the first time. He had founded a free dispensary in the rue de St.-Severin for the treatment of heart diseases. There he held classes, also free of charge. He was called Pautel, and that was all she knew of him. She watched him bending over the patient, his long, dry hand wandering over the swollen flesh of the old woman, who lay with the head thrown back on the pillow, the mouth gaping open as she passively submitted to his examination, while Herlinge looked on during the sham autopsy.

The visit was prolonged. Madame Lancelevée, beautiful and irresistible, followed eagerly the discussion that gradually disinterested the men. Thérèse Herlinge showed signs of impatience. Her eyes never left the clock, a sort of cuckoo-clock in black wood hanging on the white wall near the door. She thought of the funeral of Madame Gueméné, at which she wished to assist, but could not get away.

"How late it is," she thought, as she watched the slowly moving hands of the clock. "The ceremony is at ten o'clock at St.-Severin; my father will never finish his visit."

Her fingers played nervously with the strings of her surgeon's apron in her impatience, while her glance was raised incessantly to the clock. When the hands marked five minutes after ten she touched Mademoiselle Skaroff on the shoulder.

"Dina," in a low voice, "take my place, will you? I cannot remain longer. The funeral of the aunt of Gueméné takes place this morning. It is impossible for

me to absent myself from the ceremony. If my father asks for me, will you tell him the reason for my abrupt departure ? "

" Very well," answered Dina, in a tone of resignation. " But you know he is very strict, your father." Then, without a sound, in her fear of being noticed and called back, Thérèse glided like a shadow towards the door, past the long rows of beds, and disappeared.

In a little dressing-room adjoining the ward she divested herself of the white blouse and apron, revealing her robes of black, put on her black hat, and hurried away.

. . . . .

But the clock was slow. When the young girl entered the old church, draped in funeral hangings, the requiem Mass was nearing the end. The *catafalque* formed a brilliant spot with its lighted candles in the obscurity around it. The priest in black vestments embroidered in silver turned slowly to give the absolution during the deep silence made by the cessation of the chanting of the liturgy. On the right, a sombre mass of men knelt compact and solemn. The bald heads of the old doctors reflected the light of the waxen tapers. To the left knelt the women, who were less numerous. Thérèse perceived the large head, with its blond frizzes, of Madame Adeline turn in her direction. She made a sign that a place was vacant by her side. The poor woman had made all her round of visits in the quarter on foot before coming to the Mass. She wiped her face vigorously as she said to Thérèse, with her usual vulgarity, " My dear, how I am sweating."

Thérèse, with the piety and respect for religion installed into her mind by her mother, knelt reverently, but she could not pray. Her thoughts were not with the dead. She let her eyes roam over the mass of men on the other

side of the catafalque in search of Gueméné; but he was hidden from view.

When the ceremony was over and the procession of mourners slowly passed after the coffin, she saw Fernand Gueméné following the husband of the dead woman. As the procession parted to allow friends to approach the bereaved family, and by a low spoken word or pressure of the hand express their sympathy, Thérèse also approached and extended her hand to Gueméné. He took it coldly, ceremoniously, in silence. She passed on and took up her station just outside the portals of the church opening on to the rue Prêtres St.-Severin. She was deeply agitated, and trembled in every limb.

"Come, come, my dear; there is an empty carriage."

It was the voice of Madame Adeline. She pushed Thérèse almost by force into one of the mourning equipages that filed slowly past the portals of the church. When they were settled in the carriage and their robes properly arranged, a face, wan and funereal in its frame of black, unkempt beard, appeared in the door.

"Is there a place for me?"

Without waiting for an answer to his request, he entered the carriage, bringing with him a strong odour of absinthe; while Jeanne Adeline cried without ceremony:

"Heavens! if it isn't that madman, Morner! It is a long time since we have seen you! . . . Do you know the Gueménés?"

The eyes of the new comer regarded them vaguely as he murmured:

"No; but I was passing and found this convenient, better than taking a cab to go to Ménilmontant, where I practise at present. Why should I pay a cab? This saves my pocket forty sous, now that I am broke."

Thérèse recognised Morner as one whom her parents

had often invited to dinner for the sake of their old friendship, but she did not think it necessary to enlighten Madame Adeline of the fact when the doctoress made the introduction:

"Dr. Morner, Mademoiselle Herlinge, daughter of the master-surgeon of the Hôtel-Dieu."

At the same moment an acquaintance caught sight of Morner and, presuming on his claim to friendship, ascended the steps of the carriage, entered, and took the last seat left vacant. He bowed to the ladies with much ceremony. He was also known in the medical ward under the name of Dr. Gilbertus, a pseudonym which he signed to the scientific articles contributed to the Parisian journals. Handsome, in a heavy style, he cultivated at once an air of grave sadness and mystery, accentuated by the long black beard and dull pallor of his face. He managed to subsist amid many difficulties through his work as a sort of scientific writer for the pharmaceutical trade, which took the form of startling and offtimes vulgar puffing and advertisements.

"Good-day! How are you, doctor?" cried Madame Adeline, glad to meet another friend. Then with her careless good humour and a sly smile, "How go the *Granules hépatiques*?"

Her gay, little laugh, half-malicious, was jerked out of her by the sudden jolting of the carriage as it started on its funeral march.

The *Granules hépatiques* of which she spoke had been the subject recently of three successive articles in the Journal and were signed, "Gilbertus." These treatises dealt exhaustively with the various diseases to which human flesh is heir, and terminated by discreet counsel favourable to the granules of Professor Philindon.

Gilbertus appeared to be rather against this allusion, but finished by taking the very views he had put forth

quite seriously, encouraged by his success. The public read with avidity, and hailed him as an oracle. They were enchanted to learn, through more wonderful descriptions of his science of pathology, how to treat the kidneys, the liver, the lungs, or the heart. According to Gilbertus, the granules were recommended as a speciality, diuretic, purgative, pectoral, or stimulative. Thanks to these articles, all the world was discussing to-day the relative treatment of cirrhosis, emphysema, adherences, consumption, and erythema. He wrote the articles with the most jealous care, in order to render them into elegant prose that could at the same time be read and understood by all.

"In these days," he said with a serious air, as he caressed his long silky beard with a well-gloved hand, "in these days, who has not a tainted liver? The public can never know too much of the laws of hygiene. We must never cease to repeat that important point, to show them the road to health."

Morner shrugged his shoulders. The bones of his hollow cheeks projected over the brown whiskers in a pevish smile. He looked out on to the Seine, over which the carriage was passing at that moment. He saw the hearse, with its fine gigantic black plumes already moving ponderously along, below on the right quai of the river. The cortège was taking the road leading to Père-Lachaise, where the dead was to be interred in the family vault.

Morner took out his watch and glanced at it.

"How slowly the funeral cortège goes," he said impatiently; "it crawls like a snail; but no matter, I have still time."

"Then you practise up there, at Ménilmontant?" queried Madame Adeline, curiously.

"Yes. I have rented a small apartment near Père-Lachaise—only two rooms, a cabinet and a sitting-room.

I am there every day from midday till three o'clock, holding consultations with patients, hopeless victims of alcohol, inebriates, and idiots. Oh! they are not dangerous. They swallow all the medicine I give them to take, and go away satisfied if not cured. Besides, we are too far to be troubled by the strait-laced, middle-class, well-to-do patients, who wish to know who and what we are—whether we are legally married, and whether we have less than three children before accepting proof of our respectability. No; it is not difficult to practise there. But the work! Forty sous a consultation—and the dirty workmen, the women in their hair, without bonnet or coat, that crowd into my cabinet and wail out their beastly misery, and the tale of their stupid complaints. But how is a doctor to live?"

He shrugged his shoulders anew, and gave a sigh of disgust. Thérèse Herlinge, full of the enthusiasm of the neophyte for her profession, devoured by a passionate zeal for science, listened in dignified silence. She experienced a feeling of repulsion almost nauseating for the strange company in which she found herself. Beside her the vulgar Jeanne Adeline, a doctoress who descended to the practices of a midwife, and retailed her medical knowledge at two francs a visit, and opposite her the two men, likewise medical tradesmen. The one traded on his famous name as a savant to write brilliant and ingenious advertisements for quack medicines; the other, fat and dissipated, a gay dog of the boulevards, who prolonged his student-life until he was forty, in the orgies of the drinking-saloons and low resorts, when, by force of hunger and want, he was obliged to practise the medicine that he detested and trifled with—hating his work, and sad as a priest who continues to celebrate after having lost his faith.

Presently he continued the recital of his curious methods.

"Oh! I have found a trick. I must live. It is not

on the chance of their forty sous a visit that I can eat. My faith! it is a good game when one plucks a patient. One must turn out something, so I have my plates."

"Your plates?" interrogated the elegant, high-bred Thérèse, with a slight shudder of disdain.

"Yes, the electric plates, you know. They take famously in Ménilmontant. I thrive on the job. All the habitual drunkards have, without exception, cirrhosis, or the dilation of the stomach. I say to them, 'You will be cured in a year, six months, or three. Three months is severe, but the treatment is daily and sure to cure quick.' It is three francs a visit to apply the plates, and there are always some who walk into the trap!"

"That, my dear friend, is disgusting," said Gilbertus, with a contemptuous shake of the head.

Morner gave a harsh laugh that drew his face into a nervous grimace of wrinkles.

"And the granules, the elixirs, the caffeine, that Master Herlinge, the father of Mademoiselle, administers to his subjects, and all the imbecile therapeutics that his blind pupils, notwithstanding the fatality evident in medicine, set their hearts upon giving us? Is not that the same method, the same cures? Then, what I do is nothing more nor less than that done by my *confrères*."

Madame Adeline raised her two little plump hands in a gesture of assent, but Gilbertus cried:

"I beg your pardon! There are therapeutics and therapeutics! I know of the real remedies, the fruit of long and intelligent research, and of others derived from the highest antiquity, which by practice have been transformed until their curative properties are perfect."

"Do you know also the science of physiology, doctor?" asked Thérèse in a voice altered by the force of her indignation.

"Oh! the physiology, it is only beginning to be understood; but to what do we advance in it? Do we know how to make blood in the case of a bad anæmic? And in the presence of one suffering with blood-poisoning, can the doctor who sees the blood circulating in the organism charged with poison stop that blood by his skill until it will be renewed and purified? And when a wound is cicatrised, can you assist the healing process by forcing the birth of one little cell? If a patient has a bacillus in his flesh, you know very well that he will keep it. *Tant pis*, if his machine does not triumph and eject or destroy the beast it is not the doctor who will remove it for him!"

"Ah!" said Jeanne Adeline, a prey to profound thoughts. "That would be very easy if the bacillus could be crushed like a *pou*."

She was uncomfortably warm, and mopped her face and the folds of skin that formed her chin with a handkerchief redolent of antiseptics. The noise of the windows, agitated by the heavy movement of the carriage, made each one to speak in loud, forced voice. The doctoress continued in her masculine contralto:

"Morner is not altogether wrong. The more we practise medicine the more we see how little we really know, and then, who among the masters are we to believe? Boussard says white, and Artout says black; both appear to be right, and meanwhile the patient slips between our fingers like this poor woman we are following to the cemetery. Really! to see a creature die like that, when one is a doctor, and to be unable to prolong life a week. Ah! it is not gay. The tumour was there. We could feel it under our fingers, and there we stood around the bed, the husband, Artout, and myself, like three imbeciles, looking at the poor woman die! Ah! it is a pretty business—the practice of

medicine! *Tiens!* I am like Morner; I do not believe any more. It is not true science, the anatomy. See? we cannot see beyond our nose, and no mistake. That is the whole of it." She ceased speaking, happy to have summed up her views in those trivial words and to relieve her heart of its load of disgust for the profession that overworked her. Then, as Morner, with his air of meditative high-liver, observed her, interested by the type of that good, jolly comrade, she continued:

"Would you imagine that Lucie, my eldest daughter, who is not yet twelve years of age, has also ideas of being a doctor? But I have settled all that, poor *chou*. Throw her into the dog's life her mother leads? No, no; I will place her in the Post Office—a nice little appointment as female assistant, where she can see the world and be happy in an assured income. Ah! if some one would find a profession for women that would permit them to work at home. What a blessing it would be! Look at me! Have I a house, a home, as every woman loves; a nice little corner to go to when I want rest and quiet? Always on the go; trusting to the devil for what I eat; robbed by my servants; full of worry about my children, that I bring up as I can . . . and, to crown it all, a husband. Do you suppose it is an easy job to support them, to work seven nights out of the ten, called to confinements, false alarms over croup and what-not? Adeline is strong, they say. But all day long I trot to the office of the registrar of births and the charity bureau, doing my best for the poor patients; but I am not a horse! All the same, I love a home that is not a restaurant or only a furnished house. Ah! my friends, you see the life of a doctoress is not a bed of roses! The doctors have all the reputation and the gain: when there is a word of praise it is for the doctors!"

Thérèse, resting in the shadow of her corner of the carriage,

listened in silence. She heard Gilbertus come gallantly to the rescue as he cried:

"How, madame, can you speak thus in the presence of Mademoiselle Herlinge, for whom we all predict a brilliant career?"

"Oh! in the case of Mademoiselle Herlinge it is very different," said Jeanne Adeline.

She wished to distinguish thus the difference between them, knowing well that the young girl found in science more pleasure than it could offer to her, and that she was always free to reject it if the amusement became a constraint. Whereas, in her case science was her living. She had her diploma as midwife when she married Adeline. Then she decided to better her condition by studying for the degree of doctor, and thereby increase her income. By her courage and marvellous memory, she succeeded in gaining her wish—a place in the ranks of legitimate practice as doctor of medicine. In the midst of all this overwork, the visits to the gloomy dwellings in the rue Dauphine and the consultations in the little *entresol* in the rue Buci, she still found time to be a mother, by bringing four children into the world, thus accomplishing, by the force of her physical and mental strength, the prodigy of being at the same time a woman and a man.

"Here I am! at my street," cried Morner. "I must stop the carriage."

The cortège was passing the avenue de la République. He said good-bye and, opening the door of the carriage, sprang quickly to the pavement and hurried away.

"A brave fellow!" said Gilbertus, endeavouring to say a good word for his friend and at the same time be just; "but not serious."

He was himself supremely in earnest. He sought always the society of the celebrated members of his pro-

fession, and with that design he manifested an impressive air of admiration for the daughter of the great Herlinge, with a view of knowing her better, but, as the funeral cortège entered the gates of Père-Lachaise, Thérèse declared that in the cemetery she wished to follow the funeral on foot.

" That is a principle with me," she said, as she prepared to descend.

She was glad to escape from a company that expressed such disagreeable things.

Hastening her steps, she joined the little group of people ascending silently and wearily the main avenue of the cemetery. It was composed entirely of men : in the front Fernand walked beside the widower as chief mourner. It was one of those mornings of August when one felt a menace of approaching autumn. In the air a slight mist still hung, while already the trees were changing their green tints to red and yellow. The avenue ascended terrace by terrace to the doors of the mortuary chapel rearing the profile of its Greek façade against the clear blue of the sky. To the right and to the left the gloomy façades of that street, wrapped in endless sleep, tapered into a perspective of monuments to the illustrious dead, and amid the cold border of marble and statues a frail shrub moved gently its weeping branches of pale leaves. It was the willow over Alfred de Musset—all the poetry of an epoch, an elegy of romance, all that survived of his glory. . . .

Thérèse felt her heart oppressed with melancholy. The low voices of the men in conversation fell upon her ears with an echo that stirred her with sad doubts and misgivings of the irrefutable truths that had been expressed on the powerless fruits of medicine, and the sad words of Jeanne Adeline still troubled and oppressed her. Ah ! how the poor woman had sighed mournfully for the peaceful

joys of a home where she would be the happy mother and contented wife!

And there, before Thérèse and around her arose proofs of the everlasting power of love. She beheld the bereaved husband the centre of all eyes, hypnotising every one by his attitude of sorrow. She turned her eyes also, and her thoughts were fixed on him while he followed with slow steps, like one walking in a nightmare, the funeral vehicle scintillating with silver that bore his dead wife. At the end of that street of the dead between two level terraces appeared in all its majesty the simple and terrible architectural Monument to the Dead of Bartholomo. In the gloom of the great portal that opens on the realm of death, the gates of the eternal Beyond, two forms, chaste in their marble nudity, stand forth from the sad group around them in startling reality: they are two young lovers united still in death by an embrace noble and impressive in its expression of passionate undying love. The two beautiful bodies of polished marble seem to yield in a trance of amorous resignation to the shadow that engulphs them. Afar, at the end of the avenue by the gate itself, could be seen already clearly defined in its purity and glorified supremacy, in an eloquent gesture, the Lover and Death. Thérèse saw again her lover Gueméné as she walked near the widower. He also was alone, bereft of the dream that she had willed never to be realised. He wept, perhaps for the companion that she refused him. Then his sadness filled her with a strange feeling of sweet tenderness for him.

Madame Gueméné was buried, according to her last wish, in an old vault situated in the most ancient part of the cemetery, where the rest of her family slept in their deep graves. It was a corner full of shadow and mystery. Gigantic cypresses were grouped about without any design, as though originally planted at hazard, the thick, sumptuous

ivy had woven itself into a magnificent covering that levelled the stone mounds and climbed lovingly around the shafts of the Greek columns of the ruined tombs, or hung in funereal draperies over the urns green with moss. Enormous beeches, planted there in the last century, when the Jesuits owned the park, formed a roof of foliage through which the light filtered with green radiance. Not a sound penetrated the solitude; only the many feet of the throng awoke the solemn echoes, and the dragging steps of the undertaker's men as they carried heavily their unwieldy burden. Those lugubrious carriers looked with eager curiosity on the sorrows of others; with eyes strange yet human, they cast keen glances on the bereaved husband. He bore himself with dignity, keeping his gaze fixed on the coffin, and when it disappeared into the horrible abyss that swallowed his dear companion . . . but he frustrated the expectations of the crowd, and conquered his tears bravely.

Thérèse approached the grave: she found herself just at the side of Gueméné. He did not see her. Subtly he divined that she was near and, raising his eyes, met her glance. He was pale, and his face drawn with grief. She waited for him to speak: a subtle instinct warned her that he yearned to speak to her, but he remained silent. He hardly ventured a glance towards Thérèse, whose queenly head and profile stood out in bold relief against the background of deep and sombre verdure. She bore herself with the grace and nobleness of a beautiful statue. Her bosom rose and fell under the stress of her suppressed emotion, while, under the black hat with its plumed wings, her face shone pale and sad.

Fernand Gueméné saw her again, a moment after, when she took his hand as she passed in the line of those friends offering their condolences. And in the pressure of that little hand he felt the first thrill of real pity. When he

was about to take his place in the mourning carriage the widower repulsed him gently.

"Thanks, my dear boy, let me be alone now."

The carriage passed before him. He remained watching it, motionless, until some moments after it had disappeared. Then, in that crisis of stupor through which he was passing, it suddenly occurred to him that a walk in the open air would restore him. He was not very far from his house, and he resolved to make the journey on foot.

He was soon in the avenue de la République, where the street sloped gently, making the descent easy. It gave to his steps an impetus that rocked his body as in a cradle, and the motion soothed and refreshed his troubled mind.

The suburban tramways glided with noisy speed under the electric cord; the blue flashes of electric light on the rails caught his attention and distracted his thoughts for the moment. Suddenly he perceived a woman's form walking near him—it was Thérèse: she also descended on foot, alone. Their journey was the same. He hesitated. There was in the pace of the young girl a slackening: both seemed to be seized with the same indecision.

Then, brusquely, Fernand raised his hat to her and left the pavement to mount a passing tram.

. . . . .

One o'clock struck from the towers of Notre-Dame as he reached his house. The servant informed him that *déjeuner* was ready and three patients awaited his return.

"Thanks," he replied. "I have taken my meal on the way."

He went immediately to his cabinet. On his desk among other photographs he found that of the house-surgeons, where the form of Thérèse in her hospital blouse was to be seen behind the group.

"Why preserve this exciting souvenir?" he asked himself as he regarded the picture calmly.

Then, very quietly, he seized the photograph and tore it into pieces. One by one the fragments fell at his feet. He swept them with a motion of the foot into the fireplace, and, taking a match, deliberately set fire to the pile. When the flame had done its work he quickly opened the door of the waiting-room and called for the first patient. It was a butcher suffering from rheumatism. He showed his hands deformed by the disease. Gueméné took hold of the inflamed, trembling fingers to examine them, but he found that his own hand trembled like that of the sufferer. He made a desperate attempt to control his nervousness, but in vain; and when he tried to write a prescription the pen was helpless in his shaking fingers. It cost him a strong effort of the will to pull himself together sufficiently to enable him to write.

When the patient had gone, he rushed to the fireplace and searched the ashes. What had he done? Why had he destroyed the dear face that for many months had broken his solitude in a mystic *tête-à-tête*; that had smiled on him so tenderly like another Thérèse, more pitiful than the original, and content to be the silent companion of his work? What blind stupidity had spurred him to such an act! To burn that precious souvenir!

Among the fragments of the photograph, blackened and shrivelled by the fire, appeared a corner of the white aprons of the house-surgeons; a piece of tree was intact, also the face of Pautel the blond doctor, whose eyes wavered behind the glasses. Fernand unrolled the burnt remains of the paper, and as it crumbled under his fingers a minute portion, yellow from the flame, disclosed the head of Thérèse torn just at the neck from the rest of the photograph. He still possessed that precious relic. With the most delicate care he smoothed out the fragment and placed it in the palm of his hand, and as the moments

passed, he gazed upon it, lost in thought, heedless of the time and the duties awaiting him. When he resumed his consultations the waiting-room was thronged with patients, and six o'clock struck before he dismissed the last of them. He found on looking over the list of sick-calls recorded by the servant in the office-book, that none were very urgent, and he determined to remain at home on the plea that he was weary and ill. The servant closed the shutters of the big square bedroom on the third floor at his orders. He retired early; the night came, but he could not sleep. He turned to the wall to find relief from the wakefulness that oppressed him. Again, with a feverish movement, he changed his position, and then, distinctly visible to his excited fancy, appeared the form of Thérèse, seated on the easy-chair near the window, robed in black, and wearing the same hat, with its plumes, as he had seen her in the morning. The vision was so perfect that he recognised the embroidered collar around her throat, and the narrow fold of white muslin that gave to it a masculine touch. It was a style she habitually affected. Only, he could not discern her features in the shadow, but the eyes shone like a faint halo as they gazed fixedly upon him.

"Thérèse!" he cried, in a loud whisper. "Is it you?"

The sound of his voice startled him; it rang out strangely, making no echo in the room. He recovered himself, but his heart beat wildly before that phantom of his passion. He feared to lose the hallucination. By a great effort of the imagination, he tried to regain that sweet dream. He murmured tender and caressing words, silly nothings dear to lovers, just as he would had Thérèse really been there—his wife—in the sweet companionship of their nuptial chamber.

Suddenly he arose and rung the bell feverishly. He called for a light, his hand glass, and drinking water, and

then in nervous haste he examined his eyes, squinting nervously as he searched for some sign that would give him a clue to the state of his brain.

"Leon," he asked, "do you see anything strange in my face?"

The servant looked at him earnestly, and replied:

"No, sir."

"I have the same expression in the eyes as usual? You don't find them different?"

"No, sir."

"Do you find anything suspicious in my look?"

"No, sir."

"Thanks, Leon. One word more. Have I left a garment on the chair by the window?"

"There is nothing on the chair, sir."

"That's all right. You can leave me now."

"But, sir, are you ill? Do you prefer that I should remain a little longer?"

Gueméné was touched by the affectionate anxiety displayed by his servant, but he dismissed him, and solaced himself by keeping two lamps alight the rest of the night.

. . . . .

The following morning he arose weak and aching in every limb. He was very pale, and, according to his habit, took note of the register by recording it in a little book. He drank a little tea, and before leaving the room paused one moment by the window.

A pair of plump pigeons, with grey plumage that shone like silk, had built their nest between the branches of the tree nearest the window. The female bird was hatching for the second time. Her mate was returning to the leafy home laden with a fat, unwieldy spoil from his hunt on the river. At his approach she arose and shook lightly her shining plumage. He gave her the dainty breakfast he

had procured, which she swallowed in one delicious gulp down her pink gullet. Then, with his pretty rosy beak, like a coral jewel, he raked gently the down of her neck while she fondled his head with a movement of exquisite grace. That ideal of love between the two little winged creatures posed as though by a miracle above the flowing river, amid the great Italian poplars trembling and swaying in the morning breeze, moved Gueméné deeply. He turned and left the room with an air of unusual lightness. On the threshold of the door, placed a little to the side under the sunken and crooked arch of the old eighteenth century building, he paused an instant to ponder in an absent-minded way; then with a violent gesture he cried:

"What good is it? I cannot endure this any longer."

Ten minutes later he entered the doors of the Hôtel-Dieu, and ascended the stairway leading to the Herlinge ward. He knocked at the door of Thérèse's laboratory. A nurse passed as he stood there.

"Mademoiselle Herlinge is below, sir," she said.

"Thanks. Will you tell her that some one is waiting to see her?"

When Thérèse opened the door she found Fernand sitting in a dejected attitude in her chair, his elbows on the table, and his head buried in his hands.

"You wish to speak with me, Gueméné?" she said in a voice strained and surprised.

When he raised his head and looked on her she was moved deeply at the sight of his wan face, and, influenced by a desire to finish at once the equivocal position between them, she said with an air of friendly frankness:

"All that we discussed the other day I have pondered over carefully. I have searched my soul and examined my heart, and I know now, definitely, my poor Gueméné,

that it is impossible for me to sacrifice my profession for you."

"I ask nothing more from you," he said brokenly, "but happiness itself. I care for nothing more. Come into my life. Oh, Thérèse, come to me."

He opened his arms. An overwhelming sadness veiled for him the joy of that strange engagement. Mademoiselle Herlinge was triumphant. Her dream was completely realised. Tears of tenderness filled her eyes.

"I cannot live without you!" he added in beseeching tones. "I must have the little you will deign to give me of your love."

The dart of the blow-pipe hummed loudly on the stove, where the specimens boiled and bubbled in the little pot. On the table near the microscope lay fragments of whitish substances, anatomical specimens prepared from the extracts of the last lesson in autopsy. A violent odour of iodoform impregnated the air of the small, compact laboratory. Thérèse Herlinge trembled and grew pale with the excess of the emotion that filled her. Love passed into their troubled gaze and smoothed the way for his long-delayed coming. Fernand went close to her, and the next moment they were bound together in a long and tender embrace.

END OF BOOK I

BOOK II

I

THE modest black automobile of Artout rolled gently on its superior tyres down the avenue Kleber, bearing the Master and Madame Lancelevée in luxurious ease through the silence and mists of a cold January night. He was conveying Madame Lancelevée to her home in Passy, after a consultation they had held together.

"We did not see you this morning, my dear, at the marriage of the little Herlinge."

Madame Lancelevée gave a half smile that was like everything she did—a studied pose. She was not yet thirty-four years old, but she cared so little for those feminine vanities that enhance a woman's charm, that she appeared much older. A long cloth redingote fell in stiff folds over her black robe, but the violet rosette in the button-hole imparted to her severe costume a certain air of distinction.

"Dear Master," she said, after a moment's reflection, "Mademoiselle Herlinge did not ask my advice when she decided to marry. She did right; she would not be influenced by my opinion."

"Yes, yes, I know," said Artout, laughing. "The celibacy of women doctors. It is your creed—your religion."

"No, not my religion, but an extremely simple and rational principle that I profess openly before all the young students. I would be going against that principle if I attended the marriage of one of them. That is why I was absent at the ceremony to-day. I wish them, never

theless, all possible happiness, knowing well, alas! that they will not find it."

"Well, at all events, she will be a delicious little wife."

Artout was a man of sixty years, powerful, and close shaven. His bourbonesque profile had the majesty of a bishop.

His hands were thick and large, and contradicted the professional tradition that the surgeon's hand should be slender and thin, the better to perform its delicate work. But, notwithstanding this, he had established by the force of his ability a reputation as a master of surgery. A sort of a legend surrounded his name like a halo, spread by those who had witnessed his marvellous operations, that in all Europe there was no bistoury so sure, no scalpel that could outline the mystery of the living organs with the sure, steady strokes of an artist's crayon as that of Artout. All his fame hung upon his hands, in the calm strength and power of those boorish hands that had saved innumerable lives. And now, in the semi-darkness of the car, one might discern those great white hands, that he guarded with the reverence due to their sacred duty, clasped over the gold apple that formed the handle of his cane, in his habitual pose, while he spoke. That he was conscious of his power was apparent in his attitude and the proud carriage of his head. This air of superiority marked him as a man of distinction among his less famous confrères. He treated his male and female students with impartial favour, making no difference between them, and recognising the merits of Jeanne Adeline, whom he did not hesitate to patronise, as he acknowledged the talent of Madame Lancelevée, the genius of Thérèse Herlinge, whom he had launched without hesitation on a career that he was persuaded she would fill with honour equal to that of a man. Besides all this, Artout, the bachelor, cherished

for women in general the sentimental sympathy of the old beau for the fair sex. He beheld them in the illusive light of a seeker after happiness, the unsatiated longings of a lonely heart and fireside.

"Yes," he continued, undaunted by the cold, persistent smile of the doctoress beside him, "I have known her since she was a baby in short frocks—this little Herlinge. She is overflowing with life. She loves her husband passionately."

"If she loved him passionately, my dear Master, she would give up her profession to please him. But no; she made that a condition on marrying. She has given only the half of her life, and that will not suffice for Gueméné. I am not one of those old maids that rebel against love, but I see and I think, and I assure you that trumps do not often lead in the marriage game."

"Ta ra! ta ta! You talk like a virgin philosopher—like the marble vestal that you are. The little Herlinge would not be contented with that rôle. Let her alone; she will carry out that which she assumes to-night. She will fulfil all my predictions and become a famous young doctor. She has the stuff in her."

"Before five years," declared the sibylline personage beside him, "they will be divorced."

She felt a secret joy as she gave vent to those words of sinister prophecy on the wedding-night of her young confrères. Their talk had roused her imagination, set her fancy to picturing that wedding-night in the little mansion behind its veil of Italian poplars, where the silver and black flood of the river flowed under the nuptial windows, until she felt a fleeting pang of regret over the mystery of a like hour of love that she had voluntarily severed from her life.

"Oh, come, my dear; is it not enough for you to be

pitiless towards your own lovers? Why are you so merciless to your happy confrères that you prophesy evil to them?"

"I have been more merciful to my lovers than it appears, my dear Master. The majority of them have been consoled. They will never know the misery of being chained to a wife who is not a wife but the mistress of a forbidden, invisible lover who makes war on their domestic peace."

"You say the majority are consoled. . . . I know one who still weeps for you, and that is the little Bernard de Bunod. His mother has hated you since the day when he declared to her that he would kill himself on your account."

A low laugh of incredulity escaped the parted lips of Madame Lancelevée; it was her only response. Artout considered the conquests of this strange woman who, speaking of the men that had been in love with her, could praise the "majority" for forgetting her. She was made to be loved in an exceptional degree. The grace of her beautiful form, the charm of her eyes, heavy with slumbering passion that dreamed of a great love, appealed to and vanquished the hearts of men, but, at the same time, her implacable will subdued the desire within her and found strange delight in rejecting that which she knew would have made her happy. Her face spoke in its faded lines of the fatigue of profound struggles endured secretly until victory was attained over the rebellious flesh. She was growing old. It was many years since she had left on the battlefield of her youth its dead passions. But she had still a lover in the young man whom she had nursed and brought safely through a severe attack of diphtheria. He loved her without hope. But her busy professional life, favoured by success and fame, rendered her complaisant and tranquil to his suit. She had forgotten the others, but this pale, spoiled boy, always at his mother's side—the last of his race—counted for nothing in her eyes.

Artout spoke again :

" That one is sincere ; his weakness seeks your strength."

The automobile shook suddenly with the abrupt stoppage of the machinery. There was a throttled sound, a curb on the speed, that died gently, and the automobile stopped almost imperceptibly at the doors of Madame Lancelevée's house.

" I am free and I am happy," she said as she prepared to descend.

The doors were already open ; a pretty English maid in cap and embroidered apron was standing on the steps. She smiled a greeting to her mistress. A clear light flooded the vestibule ; on the ground floor, through the transparent lace curtains, could be seen the dining-room bathed in the rosy glow of the shaded candles, where a dainty table was spread for the evening meal of Madame Lancelevée. There she partook of it, solitary and silent, but in perfect peace. Her wisdom had prompted her to eliminate from her ambition the desire for many good things and to be content in the pursuit of one ; and that was to become an exceptional woman, a doctor and celebrity. To-day she was both a celebrity and a doctor. She was greatly in demand for the treatment of infantile diseases, especially in the high society, politically and socially. Her slow, sure diagnosis made her popular among her great confrères of the medical world. She had realised her only dream ; her ambition was satisfied, and she lived a selfish life, content with herself and unburdened by regrets.

The automobile retraced its road on the way to Artout's hotel. He pondered over the woman he had just left.

" Why should women not be like that one ? They are right, after all, to remain unmarried and cultivate without restraint their gifts of intellect. It is not, it is true, absolutely natural ; but the number of such women is very

small, and there are enough left for marriage and motherhood. Ah, that Lancelevée—is she right? The woman-doctor should she be a virgin-thinker?"

Then his mind dwelt on the indefatigable Jeanne Adeline, ever seeking to learn, and at the same time tramping day and night from house to house to support her four children on the many pieces of forty sous that she earned. The illustrated journals gave to the first a typical photograph wherein she was shown in her bacteriological laboratory; it was as the woman savant that the public appreciated and admired her. Artout pictured to himself the other woman going on her round of visits that she hastened in order to gain an extra hour, how she carried all the history of her cases in her infallible memory, of the admirable books on pathology that she had attacked in her pursuit of knowledge since her fifteenth year. Madame Lancelevée followed nobly her scientific career, but Jeanne Adeline surpassed her; for to her was given, notwithstanding her small claim to be called a personage, the execution of many important and complex functions.

"Then," thought Artout, secretly shaken in his convictions, his love of health and life. "Then, the definite verdict on these new women will be: *No husband, no children*!"

At the same hour Fernand Gueméné opened the door of his house and passed in with his bride on his arm. Their love filled them with a sweet emotion too deep for words. Thérèse trembled; then, as her glance rested on that charming perspective before her, she murmured softly:

"Oh! how lovely it is here."

The portals were decorated with flowers and plants by the servants and formed a silent welcome to their home-coming. The staircase of the old house, covered with a quaint carpet of red squares, ascended at right angles to

the dining-room, where the table was spread for supper. In the soft glow of the lamp the silver and crystal gleamed on the satiny gloss of the linen cloth, while rare flowers shed their fragrance and lent the rich note of their hues to the charming table, with its covers laid for two.

Thérèse uttered a little cry of joy.

"Oh! this is my home, now."

She expressed her admiration over the service, praised the intelligence and taste of the housekeeper, and, turning to her husband, said eagerly:

"Fernand, you must show me, immediately, everything: your smoking-room, your cabinet, and mine. I wish to see the effect of my empire furniture." It had been the wish of this young girl, so strangely indifferent to practical things that did not concern her studies, to leave the entire selection of the furniture and decoration of their love-nest to Fernand. She gave now and then some indications of her taste that guided Fernand in his choice of the furniture for her cabinet of work, but he reserved the pleasure of surprising her by the refined elegance of the home he had prepared for her.

Fernand led her on that little tour of inspection, and as she preceded him the soft *frou-frou* of her siken robe made sweet music to his ears in those heretofore silent rooms.

On the first floor the dining-room opened into the tiny smoking-room and a little sitting-room for Thérèse, the walls exquisitely draped in mauve chintz hangings and the furniture covered in the same charming style. On the second floor, owing to the limited space of the house, was situated the two consulting cabinets of this very up-to-date household. Gueménè had arranged the inner room, with its one window overlooking the court, for his own use; the other and larger room on the front, facing the river, with its beautiful view and perspective of the quay of the flower-

market, he had fitted up for his wife. The chief aim in the plan and arrangement of this exceptional establishment was to sacrifice the comfort and interests of the husband for the wife. This was so evident that Thérèse was deeply touched. Her eyes filled with tears as she seized her husband's hand. "My love! you have given me the best room. You must keep it, however. . . . You told me how pleasant it was for your consultations."

"It is your room, Thérèse; the other is not good enough for you."

His eyes beamed upon her in a gaze of tender love and calm passion. She was really there beside him, the living, breathing form of the ghost of Thérèse that had haunted the unhappy shadows of those nights of ceaseless longing in that little mansion by the river. She had come to reign there, to be the best and greatest of all his possessions, and before whom he would efface himself, a happy nonentity.

"How good it will be to work beside you," said Thérèse.

She rejoiced in the prospect of that life, happy and complete, awaiting her in that room so well suited to her work and study; it symbolised the beautiful career of the doctor in her book-cases stored with profound knowledge, her grand mahogany desk, her easy-chair before that altar of her golden dreams, the operating chair for the examination of patients, the microscope on its stand before the window, and that private door so favourably placed to open into the study of her husband, by which she might call softly to him when weary with work. . . . All her dreams were realised and crowned by the dream she had not sought. She would be a woman celebrated for her science, according to her prayer. And added to all this would be the hours of delight in that love which had captured her despite all her resistance.

Already she beheld herself the successful doctor receiving

her many patients. It had been her ambition since her childhood to be a Princess of Science, to hold her royal court of ethics for just such audiences. She would sit in her chair of state before the desk and receive the great ladies who would bring their sick and delicate children to place them humbly in her hands; she would see the wordless supplication in their eyes, and read all that passed in the eyes of those who suffer, with the mysterious power of the doctor.

"Thérèse!" called Gueméné discreetly, "our little supper has been waiting some time."

She looked at him absently, like one whose thoughts had been far away. His voice and face recalled her to the delicious present: he was her dear husband, and filled with the sweet solemnity of that realisation, she smiled on him while her lips murmured, "And upstairs."

"Upstairs," repeated the young man in the low voice of one who expresses a pious wish or murmurs a prayer. "Upstairs, there is our bridal chamber . . . but, I assure you, Thérèse, we must go down to supper at once."

They sat down to the table with an innocent delight in the sweet novelty of that first meal alone. They smiled continually, their eyes full of tender, inexpressible thoughts that they dare not speak. That beginning of their married life was calm and impressive. Those two beautiful souls had not been united without profound and anxious reflections on their future. The vows exchanged before the altar of their marriage seemed still to palpitate their hearts with the torment of uncertainty. Would they be happy?

But each kept guard on that mute, pitiless question behind the veil of their passionate eyes.

Fernand, noting the furtive observation of the servants, sought to cover his embarrassment by trifling chat.

"Have you decided what day we shall start for Genève?"

They ate with appetite, and instinctively affected an ease they were far from feeling.

Thérèse answered gaily:

"Go away? . . . But if I tell you, dear, that I have scarcely thought of it . . . that Switzerland, that Italy, the hotels. I have seen it all when on my vacation with papa and mamma. I hate railways, and I detest being away from home. . . . Go away? When I have just begun to taste the sweet quiet of this lovely little house. What good would it be? Why follow that absurd custom?"

"I wish very much," Gueméné urged, "to make the journey with you. Now, you must decide when we go."

The fresh fruits were served, and with a morsel on the end of her uplifted fork, Thérèse nibbled with her pretty teeth as she answered:

"Must I confess my dream? Well. It would be to remain here quietly, to begin our real life at once. You will forgive me for being a little methodic, won't you? I love the definite routine that fixes one's habits once for all. That is why, no doubt, I detest journeys. Go! To-morrow I wish to begin the programme of our new life. I will take up my work at the Hôtel-Dieu."

"Your resolution to finish your two years as house-surgeon is irrevocable?"

"Absolutely irrevocable, dear Fernand. I have told you this twenty times already. I am not matured yet in consultation, and nothing can take the place of the hospital. Those are the most interesting years I have passed—ah! the house-surgeon! I regret much that I have not profited better of my opportunities. I have the option of returning. Since my fifteen days' leave of absence I have been homesick for my ward and my patients."

Fernand felt a sleight tremor run through his frame,

but he gave no sign of the misgiving that chilled his heart. Thérèse ventured to say, a little timidly :

" If you are willing, I shall return there on Monday."

" But, Thérèse," he replied, " you are your own mistress. You know well that I would never in the slightest way interfere with the liberty of a woman of your ability."

He trembled as he spoke, with the force of his suppressed will. All the devotion of his profound love was poured into the words by which he gave her the freedom she craved, and abnegated his right to dominate and rule the sweet wife of his bosom, resigned himself to the inevitable results of his marriage with a Princess of Science. Thérèse regarded him fondly. This man, who knew more than she did, in whom she divined a real superiority, a medical instinct more powerful than her own, was sacrificing his wishes, his supremacy, lovingly and simply for her. She was moved by a feeling of tenderness and gratitude. All her anxieties were swept away, and she abandoned herself like a child to the spirit of love and joy that reigned in the little dainty salon where she led him after the supper.

" Dearest Fernand, you must not renounce everything for me. I must, also, on my side, make concessions. I am like any other woman. I wish to make you happy. I love you."

He thrilled under the gentle passion of her words. He trembled in an excess of happiness. The head of Thérèse sank on his shoulder ; that forehead so beautiful, the sacred shrine luminous with the noble intelligence that dwelt therein, was pressed to him. The gift of such a woman was indeed great. He gloried in his love for her, but Thérèse, overcome by her deep emotion, wished to confess all her hopes and expectations, her struggles and victories.

" Yes, I am a woman like any other, capable of loving

trustfully, like a child. My life has forced me to wear a mask. It made me, as you know, appear cold and impenetrable; but, believe me, I have always forgotten my weakness, my discouragements, my weariness. I would never acknowledge how the work drained my strength, how feeble my body was after the long, hard mornings, the three hours passed in the sick-ward, and the afternoons in the amphitheatre for the dissections. I was always sad then, and I did not know for what reason. To-day, the solitude of those other days is clear to me. I understand now—my life was empty and without love. I never confided in any one; I wrapped myself in my dreams, Fernand. I am only a simple student that you cherish. I love my life with its labour and its hardness. Will you help me to bear it bravely?"

He was intoxicated with the discovery that her naïve appeal gave him—to find under the cold, proud virgin of science the tender, loving girl. It was the unveiling of her soul, the union of their two souls that preceded that other union of heart and body.

"Oh! my Thérèse," he murmured on his side. "Forgive me if I have tried to deprive you of your great destiny. I was mad, but I will live for you. To the double development of your heart and your genius I consecrate myself. I will teach your heart the sweet lessons of love, and I will give your genius the liberty it craves, to devote all your strength and will to your art. No, you are not a simple student, but a woman rare and precious, a bright star of science. You shall have your books, your lectures, your lessons, your classes, your laboratory, and the sovereign liberty to follow your science—and, above all, you will have the absolute love and adoration of your husband."

Their hands clasped in a mute, warm pressure in that supreme moment. She turned her face to him in wordless

gratitude; tears trembled in her eyes. She arose, crossed to the window, and raised the curtain.

The black flood of the river rolled on in the darkness of the night, defined here and there by ivory-hued reflections from the dim lights afar. Like glistening fairy-like objects the boats glided by in silence, their slender prows charged with lights, cutting the shadows with points of fire. Before the windows the tall, shadowy poplars trembled and whispered many mysterious things.

For some time the two lovers regarded the scene without seeing it; that classic corner of old Paris, so dark and still, was nothing to them in those moments of expectancy. They were waiting for the subtle signal that would end the happy day. The clock struck ten—on the last stroke Thérèse murmured tenderly and simply:

"Come, let us go to our room, dearest!"

II

THE morning arrived when Gueméné, on leaving the house to make his accustomed round of visits, conducted his wife to the Hôtel-Dieu. They separated at the entrance. Thérèse went at once to her ward and, divesting herself of hat and wraps in the little dressing-room, put on the blouse and apron of service.

She appeared again as of late in the frame of the glass door and gave a sweeping glance round the beds of the ward. The sister in charge, a religious still young, with ardent eyes under her white cap, came to her with a smile of greeting. One could read a strange sympathy between the two women, so unlike, that with their opposite motives had been brought together to follow the same groove. They shook hands. The religious, much older than the young woman, had been a professed sister for five years. She brought to her duties the zeal of a burning charity. One could see that she still wept with pity over the agonies of her charges. She had at the same time the loving hand and the thousand thoughtful little attentions of a mother for her sick children. She was a simple, ignorant girl, but she brought a perfect spirit of application to her work for the love of Jesus. She bore meekly the ingratitude and impatience shown her, and conquered her antipathy for certain diseases—subtle dislikes for certain things that only a woman knows—and schooled herself in the supreme virtue of love for all, without distinction of class or person.

"Ah! Mademoiselle Herlinge. I should say Madame. Come and see my poor number seventeen. I believed I would save her, until Mademoiselle Skaroff told me yesterday that she found symptoms of broncho-pneumonia. I have already applied twenty-five cuppings this morning."

It was a fever case, a servant of eighteen years, that came under Thérèse's observation before she took her leave of absence to be married. This pneumonia was the danger that threatened convalescents in such cases. She hastened to bed number seventeen, followed by the sister, full of anxious pity. Thérèse turned back the bedgown and put her ear to the burning chest, with its irregular, heaving breaths. The auscultation was long and careful. With light fingers she probed all the thorax; she sounded the lungs from top to bottom. The patient, a beautiful girl, strong and heavily built, shaken by suffering, struggled visibly, with all her vigorous constitution, against the insidious infection. A deep lesion was located in the middle of the large and powerful lungs of the peasant. In that splendid body all the forces of life were roused in combat against the enemy. But Thérèse knew that it was all in vain. She addressed herself to the sister.

"Has she a home?"

The sister looked at the young woman, and knew that there was no hope.

"Poor little one!" she murmured. "She fought so well; she fought for life—to live and work again."

The two, sister of charity and woman-doctor—one type that disappears now to give place to the other type—drawn to the sufferer's pillow by their different vocations, hung there over the fever-stricken patient, mute with anxiety and gravely watchful; they seemed to be women of the same noble calling, with only the difference of dress. And yet there was a world of difference between them.

The young doctoress disputed the rights of death ; she saw only the case, the patient, while the religious beheld only the suffering body, the tortured soul seeking release.

The door of the ward opened again, this time to admit Dina Skaroff. She had replaced Thérèse as house-surgeon for four weeks, and it was only by the greatest effort she arrived each morning at half-past eight.

Thin to emaciation and pale with fatigue, she was a sorry figure in her white blouse, that revealed the shabbiness of her old gown striped with red, her worn shoes badly mended on the toes ; but she smiled bravely and explained in the French that was a continual stumbling-block to her :

"Already you have returned! Oh, you have not dwelt long in your dream of love."

"It was no dream, Dina," replied Thérèse. "It will last all my life."

"There are two," said Dina, "and one is much better than the other."

She scrutinised Thérèse with an eager gaze that made her jet-black eyes appear like two smouldering sparks from the hollow sockets over those poor sunken cheeks.

"Have you managed to study a little during my absence ?" asked Thérèse, calmly ignoring the curiosity of the Russian girl, so far beneath her in point of happiness, fortune, and celebrity.

"Oh, very much. I have devoured in a month all my first volume on Pathology, and now I am sure that I will be able to pass my examination and be received into the class of house-surgeon."

"Well, and why not ?" answered Thérèse, without a trace of doubt on the subject that seemed so formidable to Dina.

The quiet of the ward was broken by the sounds of

preparations for the morning visits. The great arched bays surrounding the vast room like the arched windows of a chapel were lit up. Every one spoke in a low voice, as though about to take part in a ceremony. The sick moved restlessly on their pillows. Some began to make their toilet, those seated whispered together, while others complained in their impatience for the approaching relief. The ward resembled a church where all awaited the appearance of the priest.

One by one the outdoor students arrived. Among the first entered Pautel, the young doctor from the rue St.-Severin. He followed assiduously the courses of the Herlinge lectures in his desire to become a specialist of heart diseases. He was always among the first arrivals, clad in his black frock-coat and glancing keenly through his glittering spectacles in his search for Dina Skaroff. They had not exchanged a word during all the course of lectures, but Dina felt curiously the gaze of those wandering, invisible eyes in the pale, thin face of the fair young doctor. She knew that he followed her everywhere, and one day when it rained she knew he was near to come to her assistance; but, poor and alone, a stranger lost in that immense Paris of which she knew nothing outside of the hospital, and a restaurant in the rue Berthollet, and at the same time understanding something of the Frenchman's character, which terrified her modesty, she ran away trembling, like some poor hunted little animal.

Herlinge entered punctually as the clock on the white wall struck nine. The blue eyes in his parchment-like face brightened in a smile as he saw his daughter. He was well pleased to find her back in her place again, but he only said briefly:

"Is your husband well, little one?"

Then, followed by the crowd of doctors and students,

he went quickly to the first bed, but a movement of curiosity turned all eyes towards Thérèse. The young bride, who in the middle of her honeymoon, the time when so great a change enters the life of a woman, that the proudest and firmest of her sex loses courage, and is lost to the world at that critical hour of dreams and disillusionment—comes quietly and laboriously to resume her duties. Madame Lancelevée from her place in the front row stared her out of countenance. There also was the Dr. Gilbertus, who followed enthusiastically the hospital class, although he had neither practice nor consultations, but "just to keep his hand in," as he succinctly explained. He was irreproachably attired; the fashionable false collar set off by his handsome Assyrian beard. He gathered from the lips of the great Herlinge those concise scientific phrases and graphic words that appear in the works on pathology, and that he hesitated not to use in his next article for the edification of his devout readers. Morner, wan and disreputable-looking, accompanied him. He came, without reason or object, to kill time during the hour when the taprooms were empty. He listened with unheeding ear to the wonderful and subtle dissertation of the Master on an interesting case of the incapacity of the aorta. He was bored with a discourse that had nothing to do with the study of electric plates. Then, beyond, was a mass of frock-coats of other doctors, young and old, some from the provinces who had come to Paris to hear, for once in their lives, the great Professor Herlinge speak.

There was still another circle of jackets, comprising the students from distant hospitals in town, gathered here before their examinations in the hope of seizing by some lucky chance a *colle* of Herlinge that would give them help in the coming ordeal. Behind all this crowd a group of Russian students timidly hung. They were miserably

clad, and listened eagerly, fearing to lose a single word of the lesson. It was an impressive scene; the frail little man with the white flowing hair under the black velvet cap, passing from bed to bed, followed slowly by the crowd listening gravely to his words, as the groups broke up and moved from station to station after that high-priest of science; they had the air of the pious faithful making a strange way of the cross—the Calvary of suffering.

When the class was over Thérèse called in a low voice:

"Mademoiselle Skaroff; where is Mademoiselle Skaroff?"

The sister searched with her glance the groups that broke and drifted towards the door as she repeated:

"Mademoiselle Skaroff, you are wanted by Madame Gueméné."

It was Pautel who replied in slow, soft tones, while a vague smile lit his phlegmatic features:

"Mademoiselle Skaroff has gone."

She had stolen away cautiously, like a little animal that fears to be pursued. While they were searching for her, she slipped without a sound through the crowd in her dread to be recalled, and rushed down the last steps leading from the floor of the ward. Then she glided through the entrance hall, crossed the square of Notre-Dame, and without once turning her head, set out in the direction of the street where she lodged in a furnished room.

It was in this fashion that she usually left the hospital since the day Pautel had followed her. She had no respect for the young Frenchman, or for those other students who, so different from her countrymen, could scarcely see a young, lonely girl without failing to make advances of an amorous nature to her. She had the sentimental tendencies, balanced by common sense, of her race, and did not intend being drawn into any paltry love affair that would rob her of her peace of mind, that she valued more

than any transitory happiness. It was for this reason that Pautel's attentions troubled her; she feared him, and mistook him for a man whose intentions were not those that a pure young girl could accept.

It was eleven o'clock when she reached her little room in the mansard on the sixth floor of the students' furnished apartment-house in the rue Cujas. The ceiling of the room inclined in a curve towards the walls covered with blue paper. The portrait of Tolstoi, cut from a newspaper, was pinned to the wall beside a crucifix and chromo-lithograph of the Tsarina. A large dormer-window gave air and light. There she had inserted, without any marked design, a gruesome collection of anatomical fragments; shin-bones and jaw-bones mingled with other portions of the human skeleton, were suspended by pieces of red twine from the nails, and hung over the table, loaded down with its disordered array of books. Without removing her hat she sat down to the table and wrote out her *résumé* of the lecture she had just heard delivered by Herlinge. Then she drew out the drawer of the table and brought forth a tiny iron box, which she unlocked with the key always carried in the bottom of her purse. The box contained two gold coins, a twenty-franc piece and a ten-franc piece. She gazed at them thoughtfully, realising that it was only the fifteenth, and the money must last her until the end of the month. She placed the twenty-franc piece in her purse, locked the box and returned it to the drawer, and left the room to go to the restaurant in the rue Berthollet.

Dina Skaroff was the daughter of a small tradesman of haberdashery in St. Petersburg, whose business was in continual jeopardy of failure. She had two brothers and three older sisters employed in the fine shops of the capital.

Dina did not intend to vegetate in that limited sphere for the whole of her life. She had been brought up indifferently amid the squalid surroundings of a cheap *pension* in the suburbs. She educated herself sufficiently to pass with success the examinations at the end of her studies, which is in Russia the bachelor's degree for young girls. Then one day she started for Paris with a flight of those *oiseaux de passage*, for the most part shy young Jews who had been rejected by the university, and whom France generously accepts and instructs. One of that band at least returned to her snowy country with the title of doctoress, which she had exchanged for the national diploma, with the right to exercise her profession there.

Dina's father, despite being half ruined, managed to allow her a pension of forty-five francs a month. On this she had to pay her restaurant, her furnished room, and dress, besides paying her subscriptions of the hospital class. She did not consider herself badly provided for when she thought of some of her compatriots who had even less to live upon. Bravely she wore her felt hat, bought for twenty-nine sous in the bazaar; but her poor little skinny feet, that were forced to walk incessantly to the *école*, the hospital, and the restaurant, were badly shod in boots of inferior leather that were used up in a few weeks. It was those horrible *chaussures* that filled her with a sense of shame, try as she would to hide them under her gown, that was not much better, and that had cost her only a few sous more. She worked with all her strength under these harsh and bitter difficulties, in the hope to one day vanquish all this misery and take her right place in life, like the rest of the world. After the first years of her studies, when she had assimilated the dry *technique*, she began to take a powerful interest in her profession, that captivated her. This new taste consoled her. It was

as though science had taken pity at last on that young life so terribly hard. Medicine was to her now a pleasure, as she naïvely confessed. She lived on boiled beef, wore cotton skirts, and exhibited unblushingly her poverty, but without the slightest pose of asceticism. She was sincerely disinterested in everything save her work, which she came to appreciate deeply for the profound joy it afforded her.

. . . . .

It was a little after midday when she arrived at the rue Berthollet that morning. An absolute silence reigned in the old street, lined with the gloomy façades of its high buildings. She opened the glass door of the small Russian restaurant and descended the short flight of steps leading from the street. A puff of warm, heavy air met her, laden with the close smell of the men and women packed pell-mell together in the big white room, bright with innumerable gas-jets. All were eating voraciously amid the noisy clatter of the knives and forks. An aspect of melancholy ferociousness marked all those half-famished faces. Unlike the gallantry displayed by the men one sees in the fashionable Parisian restaurants, at the sight of a pretty girl, not one head was turned to look at her as Dina entered, although mingled with the throng of miserably clad people were many young men with thick, flowing hair and ardent eyes sparkling in the hollows above their prominent cheek-bones; but they were unconscious of all else save the bread they were devouring. In the midst of the tables in a narrow passage was the *ménage*. Dina glided towards it. She found a place among those waiting to be served, thanks to her slight form, and hurried to satisfy the appetite that her healthy twenty-two years of badly nourished hunger craved, like the most ferocious of her compatriots. Here and there hands were offered her that she shook without

speaking, hands of young girls, muscular and warm, of young men, hands feverish of nihilists, hands neglected, with nails cut to the quick. Presently she gained the kitchen, where two women cooked by the stove, and filled the extended dishes with meat.

From a table Dina selected a tumbler, knife and fork, a large plate that they filled at her request with macaroni, for four sous, a portion of boiled beef at six sous, and a piece of bread for two sous. She payed with her gold coin of twenty francs, and having received the change, counted it carefully and placed the money in her purse. Then she looked about for a corner of a table upon which to place her plate. At that moment, two lads that she recognised as students arose and made a sign to her to take their places.

A pale, handsome boy, with a mass of frizzed hair and clad in velvet, was seated near her. He read, as he ate, from a work by Tolstoi. A portrait similar to that one in the room of Dina was pasted on the wall behind him. The text of the book was in French. The boy wrote annotations in Russian on the margin of the book, which he read to his neighbour on his right hand; the two exchanged their impressions in low tones. The loud rustling of a paper attracted their attention and made them turn their heads to see the cause of the strange noise. It came from a woman behind where they sat. She wore her hair cut short; under the masculine hat her eyes burned fiercely. She was a lampoonist, and excited general interest. The heavy faces round the tables brightened with excitement, the breath of conspiracy passed over the room, where the tranquil students with their soft Slav eyes continued to chew their hard boiled beef.

The door opened; Dina raised her head mechanically and looked to see who the newcomer was. Pautel was standing in the doorway. He paused a moment and

glanced about, as though seeking some one, then he descended the two steps and was in the room. Dina trembled and grew pale. He had followed her even here, she thought. Then, seeing the place beside her was not occupied, Pautel calmly seated himself there. A fit of anger seized the young girl.

"How dare he come there, where she instinctively found a refuge among her brothers—in that chaste *cénacle*, where every woman was regarded as a sister—this Frenchman, in search of adventure, daring to join her! Oh, he admired her; that was easy to see. And if she yielded, it would be an affair of a year or eighteen months, in some furnished rooms, among neighbours in the same position, at the back of an hotel of questionable character. Then, when he had torn her from her studies, broken her career, dissipated her hopes, upset her mind, and shattered her peace, he would make a rich marriage and begin a new life, turn his back upon her, leave her to the misery of an existence devoid of work, amid her neglected books, and without the courage to regain a footing in her lost career. These burning thoughts fanned the anger in her heart to white heat.

"Mademoiselle Skaroff," said the young man in a gentle voice.

She made a strong effort to resist the music of that caressing voice. There was something indefinable in it that filled her with delicious thrills.

"You recognise me, Mademoiselle Skaroff?" he repeated. He trembled more than she did in his anxiety to conciliate her.

"Yes."

"This is a very famous Russian restaurant, is it not?"

"Yes."

"I was very curious, you see; and as I have a patient

in the neighbourhood I just dropped in on passing. Your compatriots do not like strangers to come here ? "

" No."

Then, seeing that he waited to be served, she decided, since she was at home in the place, to inform him, if only out of charity, that he must wait upon himself.

" There are no waiters here ; you must go yourself to the kitchen, there at the back ; take a plate and ask for whatever you wish to eat."

He thanked her, and followed her instructions. Dina felt her uneasiness increasing. She reproached herself for condemning this young doctor, who, after all, possessed noble traits of heart. Had he not established a free dispensary for the men of the common people that were refused by the hospital, for those inferior workmen who had no money to spare for treatment and medicine ? A great softness filled her soul as she thought how sweet it must be to be loved, to find some one to cherish and guard her in that terrible Paris, so vast and lonely. She thrilled with the thought of what it would be like to be sought after and to give her love as a gift, a favour ardently and honestly desired.

He returned and sat beside her, a slice of underdone beefsteak on the plate he placed before him, and with the keen appetite of health and youth he prepared to attack the hard meat. Then Dina suddenly realised how good it was to have company and not eat alone ; she felt the influence of that soul vibrating near her, that soul she could not understand, yet seemed to breathe the sweetness of its presence as she would inhale a perfume. She was thankful that he said nothing ; she feared an avowal, and yet his silence appeared to her inexplicable.

" You do not like wine ? " he said finally, as she took the carafe of water to replenish her glass.

"No," she answered proudly; "I do not care for wine."

When the contents of her plate had been eaten, she was still hungry. Her neighbour, the handsome boy in the velvet suit, had gone; but part of his portion of bread remained. She took the bread and devoured it with the morsels of macaroni still adhering to the plate.

"You do not take anything more?" demanded Pautel in a strange voice.

"I am no longer hungry," she replied.

Every scrap of macaroni having disappeared, she hid the crust of bread in her hand and then ate the morsel furtively, that Pautel might not see that she was eating dry bread. Behind them, on the muslin curtain, the shadows of the people in the street passed more frequently. Suddenly, in an excess of nervousness, Pautel removed his eyeglasses and wiped them on a corner of his napkin; then, pushing the plate away impatiently, he muttered:

"This is not fit to eat; how can you——"

With an effort he stopped speaking. Around the two, the young girls, the conspirators, the libellers, the mysterious dreamers from Siberia were enjoying the little saucers of dessert which they had brought from the attendants by the stove—those who could afford it indulged in tea, the poorer being content with bread as an accompaniment to their stewed prunes or preserved apricots. When the enjoyment was at its height, Dina could not resist following the process with longing eyes.

"You don't like dessert?" asked Pautel indistinctly.

"No; I do not care for it."

He clenched his fist to control himself as his gaze rested on her delicate profile, where the pretty cheek was sunken to a hollow under the cheekbone, and the temple was frail and transparent under the cluster of black hair that half veiled it. Was it such food as she had partaken of that

nourished her for the work which occupied her fully eleven hours a day at the hospital classes? He examined with that same critical gaze her dress—the jacket without lining, the poor robe of serge, under which her delicate body shivered with the wintry air, despite the exercise she took in those long walks to and from the hospital.

Dina, as though she felt like another being, was strangely comfortable, and remained there after the meal, languid and without thinking. She did not count the time as lost; Pautel disturbed her no longer, on the contrary, his silent company was pleasant to her. Vaguely she recalled the incident of six months before, when he had taken her part so bravely against Herlinge himself. A clock, exactly like that of the Hôtel-Dieu, struck one. She started. What was she doing there? She was suddenly afraid, no longer of Pautel, but of herself—of her real heart, of the great lonely void in her life; she grew dizzy as she looked into that abyss of solitude.

It took all her strength to rise from the table. She was overcome with lassitude and made a pitiful effort to appear calm and strong, though her dark eyes were heavy with an intense melancholy. But she conquered her weakness, and shaking her skirt, from which fell the crumbs of her frugal meal, bowed coldly to Pautel, who watched her pass out with that graceful step that lent a distinction to her shabby little jacket and red striped skirt. He wished that he could hide himself in the corner of a deserted garden, some desert place, to relieve his bursting heart, to let flow the tears that were choking him—tears of sadness, of pity, and of love. He knew now that he would love her for ever, as he muttered between his teeth:

"Oh, my brave little girl! My brave little one!"

III

AS though to let her see, by the great bay-windows of the *salon*, the trees, statues, and birds of the gardens of the Luxembourg, that she adored, Uncle Gueméné had placed the portrait of his wife on the wall of the room facing the windows. An air of mystery reigned there around that perpetual presence of the dead. In its place near the chimney-corner the embroidery frame stood just as she had left it; the silk thread still in the needle poised in the heart of an unfinished carnation. The carpet under the embroidery frame, now slightly faded, still kept the worn imprint of the small feet in their slippers that rested there during the long hours of work. Everything in the room seemed to await with unwearying patience the return of its mistress. Presently, with reverent discretion, the door opened, and the widower entered with noiseless steps. He remained there idly absorbed in mournful reverie, his hands clasped before him as he contemplated the embroidery frame, the piano, the mirror. He fancied that he could still see her passing the needle in her work, or hear the piano vibrate to the melodies her fingers awoke, and see the faithful mirror reflect her beloved face. And all the while the portrait seemed to smile upon him with tender, passionate eyes, from its seat in the painted canvas, in all the sweetness and beauty of youth crowned by its old-fashioned coiffure of lovely hair.

One afternoon in March Fernand and Thérèse invaded

that sanctuary on a visit to the widower. They came in silently, on the tips of their toes, as though entering a church. He was reading in the obscurity old letters in a fine, angular hand. The light from the sun-bathed windows touched with slanting rays his bony face and burnished the premature silver of his hair. He raised his head and looked at the young people.

"My children!"

Thérèse had developed a profound affection for this relation, so impressive in his sorrow, who guarded his dead romance in a glorious halo of undying remembrance. This enchantment of conjugal love that kept him at the feet of a woman for twelve years filled her with wonder, and moved her with infinite pity before the spectacle of his inconsolable grief. She offered her forehead to be kissed. He appeared strange and absentminded, as though lost on the road between the living and the dead, dominated by the portrait in its heavy gilded frame that held silent court in that room of memories. Fernand, fearing to become involved in a conversation on family affairs, that always became sad and depressing, began to praise the charm of the house and its surroundings, and admire the situation in comparison with his own. He spoke of the neighbouring Ile of St.-Louis and its aspect of noble antiquity, dating back to the middle of the eighteenth century. He wished to escape the obsession of the dead, but his efforts at pleasant conversation were useless. She dwelt there just as when living. Everything there recalled the discreet, fond wife; the touch of her beautiful, wasted fingers lingered on every object; the gaze of the young man wandered reluctantly from the embroidery frame to the piano, from the piano to that expressive portrait with its enigmatical smile. But it was above all in the heart of her unhappy lover and husband that she remained a

living presence. He had no thought outside of her, and he thirsted to speak of her.

"Yes," he said, "it is very agreeable here. My poor darling loved this apartment. On every side I find souvenirs of her, and I follow her taste in remaining here. It is impossible for me to remain in Brittany. I cannot live away from the place where she wished to rest in her eternal sleep, and where I find on every hand things that remind me of her and the last weeks that we passed together. Her place was for a long time here, in that easy-chair, that was always drawn near the window. When she could no longer walk, she still followed from her bed the changing aspects of the gardens. She took so much pleasure in that view. Ah! you can therefore understand how dear the garden has become to me."

He was resigned, vanquished, and spoke gently without shedding a tear. Seven months of sorrow had triumphed over the first terrible weeks of despair. His eyes alone retained the marks of that crisis of grief in their swollen lids and worn pupils, from which the brightness had flown. Presently he continued:

"Above all else, my poor love desired that I should continue to dwell here and practise my profession. That was her supreme prayer. She wished me to live after her, and she traced clearly the programme of my life. I shall follow her commands with absolute obedience. My dear Thérèse," he cried brokenly, "she was one of those women that lead men—that inspire them, and whom they love with a devotion absolutely unselfish; a woman whose influence clear and pure burns like a flame until they seem annihilated, through the very strength of their love. I knelt at her feet like a disciple. Ah! our life was beautiful."

Thérèse felt her throat contract: the tears rushed to her eyes; she raised her swimming gaze to the portrait. She

saw dimly the glorified face of that woman who had survived so wonderfully in the imperishable love of her old husband. That portrait, with its inscrutable smile, seemed suddenly transformed into an allegorical figure emblematic of Eternal Love triumphing over human love. But was it just that this woman should have made of her husband an exceptional being, one who could no longer inspire love or seek in human sympathy the natural relief from his sorrow? Was it just?

Fernand, in a voice choked by emotion, expressed his surprise.

"You have returned to the practice of medicine?" he asked.

He knew the widower was in easy circumstances, and how simple was his mode of life. Furthermore, his bereavement would have justified his complete withdrawal from public life.

"Oh, I will not give consultations—only practise a little here in the neighbourhood."

He flushed as he spoke of that which he fain would have kept secret. The two young people understood; he would tend the poor. Then, seeing that his secret had been discovered, he hastened to give the praise where it belonged.

"It was her last wish. She made me feel that it was a duty I owed to humanity. And after all, to work is good—my poor darling knew that well."

Fernand cast a loving look on his young wife. She smiled tenderly in return. Their hearts were bound by the invisible chain that made their love a joyous, beautiful reality. Both were moved by a strange, passionate tenderness. The young husband gazed proudly upon his wife; her beauty, her intelligence thrilled him with the joy of possession. His romance, also, would be rare and precious; he also possessed a wife superior to all others. But Thérèse

remained silent; an irresistible jealousy of the dead woman seized her. She envied her the power to live after death in the faithful, loving heart of her husband. With the subtlety of a man who sees life from the outside, who beholds the living recoil from him, the widower felt the egotism of those two lovers intoxicated with life—their repulsion to the shadows wherein he loved to dwell. He forced himself to say:

"But tell me of yourselves, my children. Your happiness is very dear to me; I appreciate your charitable reserve. Have no fear, I am not, I believe, a disagreeable old man, embittered by sorrow. I love to see you happy."

Fernand answered with emotion:

"Yes, we are happy."

It was a sacred and touching moment; the nearness of Thérèse thrilled him; he looked at her with adoring eyes as he spoke, while his words had the ring of a psalm of thanksgiving.

With an effort to appear interested, the uncle tried to smile as he said:

"I think my dear niece will find no time now to give to her study of medicine."

But Thérèse, who nursed a secret pride in her superior power, and flattered herself that she could combine the beautiful love-life of the home with that of a woman-doctor, hastened to assure him of her capability.

"On the contrary," she exclaimed vehemently, "I have never worked more; I am still at the hospital. I arrive there at eight o'clock in the morning, and remain on duty until half-past eleven. Then my husband and I meet for *déjeuner* together. In the afternoon I work at home or go to the class of the amphitheatre. At four o'clock I have my *contre-visite*, to say nothing of my private experiments, that keep me hours at a time in my little labora-

tory. My evenings are not even free. Already I am thinking out my *Thèse*. I am at this moment studying the development of heart-failure in contagious diseases. Fernand is always near me; he reads the scientific reviews and smokes in his cabinet next to mine. The door between is open, and we can talk, if necessary, from room to room."

The widower no longer smiled. He let his penetrating gaze rest upon her as she spoke, while his face gradually assumed a look of resignation that was infinitely sad. He was doubtless thinking of those laborious evenings in that medical household, of the double existence of those two powerful personalities, yet so distinctly unlike; of the division of their interests that made in their home two firesides. "From room to room," Thérèse had said. His thoughts dwelt on his own experience, the only real happiness. He recalled the old sweetness of that past, the happy hours of those intimate evenings with his dear wife near him, while he read and she embroidered, under the glow of the same lamp.

"If you continue this," he said gently, "I fear that you will see very little of each other."

"With what pleasure we meet again," cried the young wife gaily. "We are wise, you see; we don't waste the delight of being together. We enjoy it in little sips, as one drinks a precious liqueur, that it may last longer."

But Fernand, more acute, on whom the sentiment of that great expert in matters of love was not lost, hastened to defend his wife.

"Thérèse is a nature so complete that she can bestow all her intellectual energies on those difficult studies that engross her, and yet keep her heart fresh and full of the deepest love. She still finds the time, though she does not tell you, to make our home perfectly happy."

The widower kept a guarded silence. He found the young couple a curious study. Thérèse, especially, appeared to him disquieting. He did not yet understand her. He had a great desire to see more of her, to observe to better advantage the companion of the young man whom he loved with a father's tenderness. Thérèse felt that subtle examination, that mute hostility, which filled her with a desire to get away.

"Dear uncle," she said affectionately, "I must go now; remember that I am still a student, and my work calls me to the hospital. It is already the hour of the *contre-visite*, and I must leave you, but Fernand will remain with you. You will be happy, shall you not, dear uncle, to have him to yourself for a little while?"

"My dear children," said Gueméné, as he fixed his penetrating gaze on Thérèse, "do not separate on my account, and never separate on your own. Your lives are bound together into one. You must live the same life. Remember my words."

. . . . .

Once on the boulevard, Thérèse and Fernand instinctively drew close to each other: they linked arms, and without speaking, walked quickly on. The visit to the widower uncle oppressed them. They were like those faithful, who, when they have left the church where they were admonished for their sins, still carried with them the echo of the voice of the priest. The last phrase of the widower, "You must live the same life," troubled the peace of mind of Thérèse. "Live the same life." That was, then, the rule of great love, as she heard it from the lips of that heroic lover—"Live the same life." But was she to abdicate herself to be swallowed up in another being—to no longer exist as an independent personality? Suddenly she remembered who and what she was—Thérèse

Herlinge, house-doctor of the hospitals of Paris. Her vanity rebounded as she drew herself proudly erect on the arm of her husband. For this simple doctor of the people without fame or name she had sacrificed her glorious name, given her body and her love. She was filled with the magnitude of her own generosity, and hugged to her breast the secret that she guarded—the knowledge that she was still the superior, independent being. Then in the very abandon of gratified love and gratified vanity, she pressed nearer to him, leaned more heavily on his arm as they walked, while in a voice of delicious softness she murmured, "Dearest Fernand."

"How did you find my uncle?" asked the young man.

"Strange and mysterious," she replied. "He is a man who lives with the dead."

They brushed against the gates of the Musée de Cluny, where they perceived a great section of masonry of the Gallo-Roman period beside the graceful apse of the chapel. A budding green was beginning to adorn the trees in the midst of the Gothic fragments of arches, ogives, slender columns with their airy astragals, which served as roosts for the broods of noisy sparrows.

"Good-day, Gueméné."

It was Pautel who addressed them. He wore a high hat in the latest fashion, his slender form showing to the best advantage in a long frock-coat tightly buttoned. He had just left his *clinique* in the rue de la St.-Severin.

"I must speak to you," he exclaimed as he saluted Thérèse. "It is destiny that has thrown me in your way. Perhaps Madame Gueméné will do me the very great favour to lend to destiny her charming form? The question is neither more nor less than that."

"What is the matter with you, Pautel?" inquired Gueméné, struck by the unexpected excitement in the

eyes of this usually easy-going youth. What do you mean? I don't know much of mythology."

"Nothing. I am all right; I have never been better in all my life. It is the result of great peace of mind. I have resolved to marry the woman I love. When one has taken such a resolution, and one sees distinctly his life spread out before him, on the right road, all evasion over, all uncertainty disappears. Take my word for it, my boy, one is in a most agreeable state of mind."

"Especially when the woman is pretty," said Gueméné.

"And when she has the virtues of Dina," cried Thérèse with a merry laugh.

Pautel started in surprise.

"How did you know it?"

"How do I know, my poor boy? But it was very plain. Since the moment you began to attend the classes at the hospital you never ceased to run after her. You had no eyes for black hair; every one could see it. When she passed you, how you would readjust your eye-glasses as though you had the *tic*, in order to follow as long as possible that little white blouse all over the ward."

The air was warm, and Gueméné proposed that they should go and sit in the square.

"Pautel will tell us of his love affairs."

"I adore love stories," said Thérèse. "But what time shall I get to the hospital?"

They took three chairs under the only portico which adorned the middle of the garden with its triple festoon of three grand arches. Many old gentlemen were reading their papers on the neighbouring benches. Amid the rugged and mighty trunks of the beeches the white columns scattered about raised their smooth, slender shafts of gleaming white. Afar, a virgin of the thirteenth century in her fluted folds of drapery resembled a narrow pillar of marble.

"I will marry Mademoiselle Skaroff, if she will accept me," declared Pautel with an assurance that he was far from feeling. "I have observed that young girl for a long time. Her character fascinates me; I believe that we would be very happy together. She is sweet and serious. That would be a wife that would not fail to be a friend, a comrade, as well."

"Dina!" cried Thérèse enthusiastically. "Why, my dear boy, she made you crazy. That could be seen under your affectation of calm. If you knew her as I know her, you would love her ten times more than you do now."

Pautel let his eye-glasses fall in his agitation. He tried in vain to replace them; his near-sighted eyes sought vaguely to see Thérèse, with an imploring gaze, as he demanded breathlessly:

"Can I beseech you to be my intermediary with her, Madame?"

Thérèse was deeply touched.

"Most willingly, Pautel, most willingly. I shall see her to-morrow, after the morning visit at the hospital. Will you take *déjeuner* with us to learn the result?"

"Oh, the result?" said Pautel despondently.

"Come, old man, do not torment yourself," cried Guméné, patting him on the shoulder. "If she refuses you, then I shall know she is not the good and sympathetic girl I take her for. She—not in love with you! That shy little antelope, with her beautiful eyes searching for love, her eyes discreet and tender, that seem to speak of the misery of her loneliness. Get along! Isn't it so, Thérèse?"

To tell the truth, they took a somewhat frivolous view of that love affair. Their love alone occupied them, and that seemed so great, so perfect, so dazzling, that it blinded them to all other love. Still, for the sake of their friendship, they feigned a deep interest in that of the young man,

and Thérèse prepared herself to answer graciously all his questions. Then Pautel, rather embarrassed by the consciousness of what Thérèse was, dared to put the question, little dreaming how much it had already troubled his two friends:

"Do you believe that for my sake Dina will sever her connection with medicine?"

At the end of that romantic garden, bathed in the twilight of spring, where these three discreet young people talked in low tones of love unobserved by the passers-by, the lawns stretched, mysteriously adorned by shapeless, precious fragments of ruined sculptures chipped by the hand of time, which the sympathetic ivy strove to restore by its sumptuous, living verdure, and where the delicate moss wove geometrical, fanciful designs to hide the secret decay of the stone. Beyond, two winged lions of bronze, that the moss had likewise lovingly enveloped, kept guard over the closed gates.

Thérèse and Fernand looked at each other. How strange. Again that difficult problem faced them—that case of conscience that had already caused them so much suffering, and now the souvenir of doubt arose in their thoughts. The eyes of Thérèse said to her husband, "Are you, then, accomplices to conspire against our liberty and our glory? Is it not enough that we have given you our hearts, our caresses, that you must conspire to rob us of our intellectual liberty—to force the very last entrenchment and seize our individuality, already half conquered?"

The eyes of Fernand responded sadly—"You see! you see. He also demands all that I wished. I was not such a monster after all." Both were upset by those secret sensations roused by the few words of Pautel.

Thérèse, to cover her embarrassment, laughed as she said:

"Why do you wish the poor little one to break off her career? It will break her heart as well."

"Oh!" stammered Pautel, feeling keenly the awkward predicament his words brought upon him, as he remembered that Thérèse had not relinquished her practice of medicine. "It is a notion of mine; I do not wish to see myself the husband of a woman-doctor. You are too strong for us—you overwhelm us with your wisdom. I should be horribly humiliated to know less than my wife. And besides, I have the middle-class idea of marriage."

"My dear friend," declared Gueméné, with warmth, "we have no right to demand of our wives such an abdication. They rest, after all, mistress of their own lives. We may ask them to be our associates, but we must not press them to make sacrifices for us. It is companions, not slaves we would wish them to be. We must respect their intellectual life, protect it, defend it, if need be; but we must not stifle it—that would be an odious act."

Then Thérèse spoke in her turn:

"Never, never would a true student renounce her career for love. Dina is to-day passionately absorbed in her work. There is always in our studies a period of enchantment, where the first difficulties are surmounted, when we plunge with enthusiasm into science. She has made the plunge; I am very near it. For many weeks she has worked with a fervour of study that has transfigured her. She literally *drinks* books!"

"Above all," continued Gueméné gaily, "I have won the right to speak of those things. Behold in us a living example of what we preach! I not only admire my wife, but I recognise her right to take her proper place in the world, to bear the title of doctor as I do. We know how to love one another notwithstanding the similarity of our profession. We are the new man and wife; we have inaugurated a new era, but in the harmonious recognition of our blessed rights."

"And what about boredom and loneliness?" said Thérèse, "that double-headed serpent of the home; it is vanquished in advance. Believe me, it is a good thing for a married woman to have some special work to occupy her thoughts and idle moments."

"That is true," replied Pautel, who had listened with patience and the docility of a convert. "But, Madame Gueméné, I beg you, all the same, to ask your friend if she will marry me—if she would be content to become an old-fashioned wife?"

Pautel was a man of the North, cold, thoughtful, and unfathomable. Thérèse had a flash of temper before that example of obstinate calm.

"I see you are stubborn as an ox; then do not count on me to plead your cause, foolish boy. It is not I who will advise Dina to do a wicked thing; for what you ask is a very wicked thing indeed."

She rose and buttoned her jacket, pulled on her gloves, and prepared to go. She scanned him with a proud, angry glance as she repeated:

"A wicked act. Do you hear?"

Gueméné regarded her with his loving smile. She seemed to him like a proud, charming Minerve in her scorn, and yet so womanly in that burst of pretty temper and childish unreasonableness. With a movement of impatience she left the two young men. They arose, and Gueméné, turning to Pautel, was about to reproach him, but he felt a sudden pity for the young man.

"Come, old boy, bear up. Of what use are discussions? If she loves you, you will be the winner."

"Yes; but if she does not love me I am done for."

"Listen to me, Pautel," said Thérèse, approaching him. She was somewhat appeased by his evident despair. "I will overcome my objections and do what you expect of

me, but I hesitate to take the least responsibility. To-morrow I shall say nothing to Dina of your visit. I will invite her to take *déjeuner* with us. There in our nest, amid the happy atmosphere of our fireside, and the example of our devoted married life, she will learn of your love from your own lips, and hear the sacrifice you demand of her."

With a friendly shake of the hand she left him to dream in the square amid the deafening noise, the nursery of birds. She went away triumphant on the arm of her young husband. Gueméné heard her murmur tenderly to the cadence of their footsteps:

"Oh, Fernand! Fernand! Thanks for all those noble things you said. I see at last that you understand me. Oh, I know now what it is to be happy."

He felt the tremor of her emotion on his arm as they walked thus, loving, thrilling with passion towards the old sombre hospital, the portico of which was now visible on the opposite side of the river. She realised the blessed ideal of the new woman. The labour of her brain detracted nothing from the struggle of her heart and her youth. This student, so severe in her work, remained the most caressing and seductive of wives. When they passed over the *Petit Pont* and crossed the *Parvis* they paused on the steps of the hospital to say good-bye. The excitement of the scene with Pautel still lingered with them. Thérèse overflowed with gratitude for the warm championship of her husband. Suddenly, with a gesture of affection, half impulse, half deliberate, she leaned on his shoulder, and there, on the steps before the great open door, in full sight of Paris and under the sky, the daughter of the famous Professor Herlinge raised her lips, and in sight of the people passing by, proudly kissed the humble doctor, Fernand Gueméné.

IV

DINA SKAROFF worked passionately during the four or five weeks preceding the examinations for the post of house-surgeon in the hospital. She dreaded above all the trial of writing her thesis on pathology, and to that end laboured incessantly over the task of research, and reading up all the medical books within reach. She felt now that she knew her subject, and was consequently highly elated, and studied with the utmost enthusiasm. That which had been a difficulty became a pleasure to her. As she pursued the treatises she saw spread out before her on the pages, as in a panorama, all the miseries of humanity depicted on the coloured plates with a fidelity that was brutal in their truth to nature. A great pride filled her as she realised that her memory was in full possession of all those detailed examples. The sanguinary souvenirs of autopsies, the acrid odours of the dissecting amphitheatre, the repugnant aspect of illness, the disgust, the pity itself—all was transformed. Medicine had become for her a grand poem. The diseases, the mysterious manœuvres of the cellular organs, therapeutics was to her a microscopic epic, wherein was enacted the silent battle of Nature against the foe of human health. The noble words of science, pure in their colourless expression, its language, impassive and cold, accomplished the idealisation of all those pathological horrors, in the delicate brain of the imaginative young girl. She knew the processes of the microbes as a good rhetorician knows the march of

the armies in every combat of the Iliad. And the hope of attaining, little by little, the command of that medical knowledge that would one day win the approval of the Master, and before which all the class would bow, made her eyes glisten with a new brightness and thrilled the lonely soul of the poor unknown girl. Her mornings were passed at the hospital; at midday she went for a frugal *déjeuner* at some wine shop hidden away in one of the old streets that immortalise old Paris, in the neighbourhood of St.-Severin. She no longer frequented the Russian restaurant in the rue Berthollet. By two o'clock she was again at work; then at six the little alcohol stove was lit, and she prepared her supper of two eggs and a cup of tea, after which she was absorbed in her work anew, and with shining eyes and burning cheeks she sat studying late into the night.

Her labour was its own reward and brought her the content and peace of mind she sought. The episode of the meeting with Pautel in the restaurant was forgotten. She prudently refrained from a repetition by keeping away from the place. When she did think of it by chance, she shuddered at the recollection of the strange new agitation that his attentions awoke in her, and hastened to banish the thought with the reflection of what might have been her fate had Pautel asked her to love him that day. But she had recovered, and what strength work infused into those who consecrated themselves to it! She gloried in that domination over herself; that science which had saved her also inspired her with the tenderest devotion. She went, in her exalted imagination of the Slav, to the feet of that figure of the protecting and maternal Medicine for refuge, as a devotee would kneel at the shrine of the Virgin. One evening in her ecstasy she seized a book on therapeutics and kissed it with reverent passion.

Meanwhile, around her the life of the Latin quarter

vibrated with youth and pleasure; love streamed in the streets like a great wave as she passed and repassed proudly through the courts and alleys, so, when she beheld the amorous couples linked together issue from the doors of the *brasseries* to take their evening promenade, Dina pitied the women and despised the young Frenchmen who made of them the plaything of the moment. They could not understand the eternal love that would be faithful to one being.

One evening on returning from the *Faculté*, at the corner of the boulevard and the rue Cujas, Dina saw two lovers embracing one another. The young man was a big student with masses of fair hair under his cap; his back was turned to her, but his pretty sweetheart was plainly visible in the clear evening light. Dina saw distinctly her face, with its voluptuous smile of ecstasy. When Dina was in her little room on the sixth floor, which she had reached in haste, she sank beside the table, and, leaning on her elbows before her books, wept long and pitifully. She had no wish to work that night. Life was so sad! Alas!

. . . . .

Life was very sad, but the spring morning was very joyous that following day, when by half-past eight she walked through the boulevard St.-Michel to her work at the Hôtel-Dieu. With her heavy portfolio under her arm, her warm jacket buttoned tightly around the slight form, she walked quickly, without dreams, looking severely ahead. Already the trees along the boulevard were heavy with their swelling buds, the municipal sprinklers inundated the pavements with spring-like streams of shining drops; below, against the blue sky of the horizon, was defined the gilded aerial form of *Sainte-Chapelle*, piercing with its pointed shaft the golden sunlight. Dina took the right side of the bridge St.-Michel. Notre-Dame appeared to her,

gigantic, lying on her geometrical portals bristling with gargoyles.

Dina passed the threshold of the Hôtel-Dieu and climbed the staircase. Thérèse had already arrived and was waiting in the laboratory. In the ward adjoining a solitary house-surgeon was busy examining the patients that had fallen to his share of the work. Thérèse, who had been watching some time for Dina, stopped her in the passage.

"How are you this morning?" she asked.

"Very well, thank you," replied the young girl.

For a moment Thérèse regarded the Russian girl with compassion. The struggle against overwhelming difficulties to achieve her ambition to become a woman-doctor, the battle against her heart's craving for love, had marked that pretty face with an aspect of deep sadness. Thérèse rejoiced in the knowledge that she was secretly loved by that honourable young man Pautel. It seemed to her one of the miracles of justice so seldom met with in life. She was worthy to have her full share of happiness, that poor little Dina, so lonely, so miserable, and withal so courageous.

"Are you at work on something interesting?" asked the young girl.

"Oh, nothing extraordinary. I am very busy preparing my Thesis," was the answer.

Dina turned to go to the robing-room for the purpose of donning the white blouse and apron of the student, when Thérèse detained her, saying:

"By the way, my husband would like to see you. Yes; he wishes to speak to you about a *colle* of Boussard; it is on the subject of your studies. Will you *déjeuner* with us?"

"With you?" repeated Dina.

"Yes, with us. We can talk better then."

Dina reflected an instant. Here in the hospital the studies in common, the lectures, the experiments, the

comradeship levelled all social differences and made the poor Russian student in her cotton gown the equal of the elegant daughter of the rich and famous Professor Herlinge. Nevertheless she resisted the temptation to accept the invitation as she thought of her poverty, and to conceal her feeling of pride in the matter, said gaily:

"*Déjeuner* with you! My dear, what are you thinking about? Look at me; I am not presentable. I would shock your servant."

Shaking up the folds of her dress, already threadbare with long usage, she bravely uncovered her worn, patched boots.

"These are not seen here; I hide my dress under the hospital blouse, but in your drawing-room!"

Thérèse, moved by still deeper compassion, embraced her as she tenderly sought to put her scruples at ease.

"You are charming," she said, "you are the little goddess *Hygie*, daughter of *Asclêpios*, our common god. You do not carry the cup and the serpent, but in your hands you bear the glorious knowledge that will make of you a great healer if you deviate not from the path in which you have begun your career. Believe me, then, I shall be proud to receive in my house a confrère of your ability. We need many workers like you to force France to recognise the rights of the woman-doctor to fame."

The Russian girl answered gravely:

"The day when I shall be able to gain my own living I shall laugh at fashion, but I will buy good, comfortable gowns."

Each was pursuing in her own way the attainment of their cherished ideal. That of Thérèse was for the glorious emancipation of the intellectual woman, while Dina dreamed of the time when she would earn two roubles a visit, and could afford to buy a cloth mantle like that worn by Madame Lancelevée.

"In bed No. 7 there is a new patient for you, Dina," said Thérèse, descending from the ideal to the practical; "one that has just arrived. Go and examine the heart before my father comes; you will be interrogated on the case."

Dina Skaroff entered the ward, and, going to the patient, at once began an auscultation. When Herlinge entered, followed by his audience of students, she looked up to assure herself that Pautel was not one of the throng. He came rarely to the lectures by the bedside of the patients. But every Wednesday Dina dreaded his appearance; now, each time the glass door opened to admit some one she cast a furtive glance towards the newcomer, thinking it might be the young man, her heart beating meanwhile in mingled apprehension and hope.

Throughout the visit she was gay and light-hearted. When Herlinge interrogated her on the case of the new patient, she boldly pronounced it to be one of myocarditis, which accorded with the diagnosis of the Master.

"Explain your reasons, Mademoiselle Skaroff," said the great man, before whom the oldest and most experienced doctors trembled.

She made her demonstration fearlessly. The invitation of the Gueménés had given her confidence in herself. She felt as happy as a child, and then, if at one of the oral examinations of the class of house-surgeons she fell into the claws of Boussard, it would be very useful to know one of those favourite traps of the examining Professor that the students had nicknamed *colles*. Frequently the Professors were inspired by the strange cases that occurred in their practice to set traps for their students by putting different questions bearing on the case. Just at that time the medical world was talking about a cure made by Boussard: it was a famous operation, and created quite a stir in medical circles. It was a case in the family

of a foreign sovereign. Boussard had been called in, and healed the royal child of a disease of the ears. Dina had no doubt about the importance of the *colle* that Gueméné wished to reveal to her; it would arm her for the examination of the dreaded Master.

After the departure of Herlinge, Thérèse and Dina dressed together. One making a mirror of the glass door of the laboratory, arranged her dainty hat, covered with light, graceful feathers, attaching it to her hair by five great pins, while the other carelessly stuck on her two rolls of wavy hair the big discoloured hat, guiltless of ribbon or feather, that seemed to overwhelm her little figure.

They set out for the Ile St.-Louis, talking on the way of an autopsy they had made when in a former class, at which Thérèse had assisted.

"The lungs," she said, "were microscopic. Think of it, my dear, in a pregnant woman, too. And the little one was nothing but a doll, with all the organs in miniature. Why, the woman was thirty years old."

"Have you as yet made any discoveries relative to the infantile organs?" asked Dina, deeply interested.

Then, unlike the young male students who, during their leisure hours, were glad to evade all medical questions, the two women plunged into a fascinating discussion on their studies and experiences at the hospital. They had a curious interruption to that scientific chat. Coming towards them was a puny, miserable-looking little man, in a worn waterproof coat, conducting a band of four noisy children, two boys and two girls.

"Look! there is Monsieur Adeline," exclaimed Thérèse, "whom I know. He is steward of the *Pitié*, and husband of the doctoress."

He saluted them ceremoniously, and as he raised his arm he revealed under the short sleeve of the overcoat the

frayed and dirty cuffs of a week's usage. Thérèse loved that laborious household, where the wife gave such a beautiful example to those who preached of the incompatability between the practice of medicine and the duty of a wife. She stopped the "good Monsieur Adeline" to shake hands with him. They were in that picturesque street of the *Cloître*, which runs under the black buttresses of Notre-Dame. High up, a line of seemingly miniature cathedrals arose from each of the buttresses and pillars. The two elder Adelines set to work to climb the gates, their sisters, badly brought up, did not hesitate to emulate their exaample, despite their skirts, while their father's attention was engrossed by the conversation with Thérèse.

"We had just come out of the Morgue when you saw us," he explained. "It is already the Easter holidays, and I must give the children a little distraction. They wanted to go to the Morgue. One does not really know what to do with them. It is my poor Jeanne who put them in my charge. She is very busy—and has made three accouchements in three days—I should say three nights—and yesterday evening the doctor Artout telegraphed for her. Just now she is with a case of appendicitis to administer the chloroform. Artout favours Madame Lancelevée, it is true, but he sends for Jeanne every now and then. That's all very well, Madame Gueméné, but it is as though he did it expressly; his *petit bleu* always comes when my wife has an accouchement to make during the night. Then she is obliged to go out again in the morning without having a wink of sleep."

"It is more profitable to administer chloroform in the rich and fashionable society of the Étoile than to make the accouchement in the humble rue Dauphine," said Thérèse. "Madame Adeline, in such cases, sacrifices the second for the first. The poor must be sacrificed for the rich!"

The steward of the *Pitié* assumed an air of confidence as he said:

"Between ourselves, Madame Gueméné, if she could be sure of Dr. Artout, Jeanne would gladly give up some of her practice, it is so poor. But when Dr. Artout sends for my wife, it is because the other—Madame Lancelevée—has failed him. In such a case it is important that she should not neglect her patients who, at least, are sure."

He interrupted his confidences to give his attention to the children, who detached their little heels from the railings as though by a miracle, the girls bursting with laughter, but the boys again attempting their perilous climbing.

"Come, come; we must be getting home," said the father. "The rue de Buci is very far, and I am due at my bureau at two o'clock. Ah! Madame; those holidays! those holidays!"

The poor man evidently had his hands full. He resumed his air of mystery, and holding the border of his cap to his mouth to prevent the children from overhearing his words, he leaned towards Thérèse as he whispered:

"The worst is that pack-horse of a servant; she beats them when they are alone in the house."

He gathered his noisy band and made them salute the ladies, Thérèse saying, to comfort him as he left:

"Bah! they are very good, and very nice indeed!"

Adeline was a man of forty-four years of age, modest, quiet, and resigned. His worn linen, the dust that had accumulated on the rim of his hat, the neglected condition of his shabby clothes, all betrayed the disorder of his home. He submitted with gentle indifference to it all—that disorganised household, where his wife was the only one that complained. Dina Skaroff thoughtfully observed the whole scene in silence.

"I cannot explain the straits in which the Adeline

family appear to live," said Thérèse; "for, after all, the husband and wife have each a means of livelihood."

. . . . .

They passed over the bridge St.-Louis. Presently, beyond the trees, the narrow façade of the little mansion appeared in sight, with its arched door slightly out of line, owing to the age of the quaint dwelling.

"I am very happy, Dina, to show you my house," said Thérèse as they entered.

Dina thought of the house she hoped to possess some day in St. Petersburg, and where she would have, like Thérèse, servants to wait upon her, and also a consulting-room, where the ladies of the aristocracy would gladly come to avail themselves of her distinguished services as a woman-doctor. It would be like that into which Madame Gueméné introduced her; a little salon, daintily furnished, and decorated in pale tints of Persian colours.

"Show me your cabinet," asked Dina.

This she would copy also in the Parisian style.

"Excuse me a moment," responded Thérèse, "I must now go and look after the *déjeuner*.

Like all young married women, Thérèse was much interested in the care of her home, and flattered herself that she was a perfect housekeeper. She employed three domestics; as in the Herlinge household—a cook, valet, and chamber-maid. The man, Leon, was in the service of the doctor before his marriage. Thérèse had brought with her Rose, her parents' cook, who proved an autocratic personage that absolutely ruled the affairs of the household. The service at the hospital obliged Thérèse to leave her house before nine o'clock, and gave her no time to give the orders for the day. Nevertheless, she managed to combine her household duties and those of her profession by a visit to the kitchen before going to the Hôtel-Dieu,

to talk over the menus of the day with the cook, much to the annoyance of the old servant, who resented the surveillance of her young mistress.

That day a cloud had arisen between them, some misunderstanding of which Dina caught the echoes as she sat in the little mauve drawing-room. When Thérèse entered a few moments later, she did not conceal her annoyance.

"Rose is unsupportable," she exclaimed. "There is a *déjeuner* that my husband will not eat. One would think that she had expressly chosen the dish that he detests! Cutlets, with onion sauce—and another that will make him fly—lobster; he has never been able to conquer his repugnance for it; also cold chicken! I have told Rose ten times that Fernand will not eat cold chicken."

Then controlling herself:

"Pardon, Dina, I must appear ridiculous to you. But, when one is married, you see, those things are of great importance; a wife who loves her husband must look after his material happiness also. Is it not so?"

"I don't think you ridiculous; I only think that for women of our profession it is difficult to be good wives."

"How difficult? Not at all, dear! All these *contre-temps* are the fault of my old servant, who repeatedly forgets my instructions. I flatter myself that I am a good wife, and, on the other hand, a good house-surgeon."

Steps were heard ascending the staircase. Thérèse's face was brightened by a joyous smile. The doctor had returned. He opened the door, and seeing Dina shook her hand warmly, then he caressed his wife. He looked worn out with his professional duties of the morning.

"I am dying with hunger!" he said, as he looked around the pretty room with an air of content to be home at last, that he might enjoy a good *déjeuner* in the company of his fond little wife. But Thérèse cried sadly:

"My poor boy! My poor darling!"

"What is the matter?"

As they passed into the dining-room she explained the stupid mistakes of Rose—the *purée* of onions, the lobster, the cold chicken. An expression of disappointment and anger, followed by one of resignation, swept over his face. Dina heard him mutter a word not intended for her ear:

"Oh! hang it all!"

Then he laughed, to regain his temper, seeing the vexation of Thérèse.

"Come, come! it is nothing. I will eat the *hors-d'œuvre* and Rose shall cook some eggs for me."

When they were seated at table, Dina, who ate ceremoniously, asked the momentous question:

"Do you wish to tell me a *colle* of Boussard?"

Fernand opened his eyes in astonishment as he repeated:

"A *colle* of Boussard."

"Yes," Thérèse hastened to say. "You know . . . why we have invited Dina."

They looked at each other, then looked at Dina, and began to laugh together like two children. Then they endeavoured to shift the duty of explaining from one to the other.

"Tell her all, Fernand."

"Certainly not; that is your affair; your rightful affair."

The poor little Russian opened her beautiful eyes wide and regarded them in astonishment.

Thérèse sent away the servant on some pretended errand. Then Gueméné said seriously:

"Mademoiselle Skaroff, one of my friends is very much in love with you."

"Yes," said Thérèse, interrupting him, "my little Dina, there it is. The famous *colle* of Boussard; it is not a question of him, but of another, who is mad over you—

absolutely crazy, my dear; and it is for the purpose of submitting a proposal of marriage that we have invited you to-day. Tell me, Dina, do you wish to marry?"

Dina dropped her trembling hands on the table-cloth, but remained silent. Thérèse tried to read her thoughts; they were impenetrable. She recalled the words of her husband: "The beautiful eyes of Mademoiselle Skaroff are like those of an antelope"; and she had a vision of the time when she was a little girl, playing with those pretty creatures in the Jardin d'Acclimatation, who fed from her hand, delicately, yet always preserving their air of haughty melancholy, their mysterious eyes regarding her gently, with a mingled expression of friendship, devotion, or indifference. The soul of the Russian girl seemed also as enigmatical as those of her inferior brothers.

"What is the name of your friend?" at last asked the young girl.

"It is Pautel, dear; you know him: Pautel, who attends, now and then, the hospital classes."

"Ah!" murmured Dina.

That was all; but they could see the smile on her lips, the eyes cast down, and the pallor that overspread her cheeks. She did not answer. It was evident that she had received a great surprise—that she was deeply moved. In her heart she was regretting the solitude of her little chamber in the attic, where she might have given vent to the delicious pain of her emotion and wept for very joy; but here she must hide her feelings.

"He loves you very much," said Gueméné.

She replied:

"Then he asks me to be his wife?"

"He is truly worthy of your love and the happiness you will give him. I esteem Pautel very highly. He is the most sincere man I know. He is good, very good."

The bosom of Dina heaved slowly, notwithstanding her efforts to be mistress of herself. Two pearly tears hung on her eyelashes, then suddenly a light, at once heroic and tender, almost savage in its intensity, flashed from the profound depths of her beautiful eyes.

"Yes! He is good!" she murmured passionately.

Love so long repulsed claimed her victoriously, overcame her, transfigured her. The feeble antelope had escaped the hunters, and already she saw before her the blessed pastures where she would find shelter, protection, in the arms of a loving husband.

"Oh! I am happy," she said simply. "I was so weary of being alone!"

She no longer restrained her emotion, and begged her hosts to excuse her. Fernand and Thérèse waited in silence. The simplicity of the poor girl touched them and appealed to the most sacred feeling of their hearts. It was a joy to them to behold that innocent happiness in being loved succeed the distress that had crushed her youth.

"We are very fond of you, my dear little Dina; your good fortune makes us very happy." She leaned towards her and took her hand. "You consent to become the wife of Pautel, but that excellent young man has very peculiar ideas about marriage; he will ask you to make a sacrifice to which you will certainly not consent."

"Does he wish me to give up my religion?" asked Dina.

She was a fanatical Catholic, and attended to her religious duties with a fidelity that had not escaped the notice of her comrades at the hospital.

"No," answered Thérèse. "He will ask you to give up your profession—your ambition to become a woman-doctor."

"Ah!" said Dina, without a word of surprise or protestation.

A silence fell upon the three. Dina became thoughtful, while Thérèse studied her face, but Gueméné, who was especially interested as he recalled his own ordeal, awaited anxiously the answer of the young girl. Meanwhile, the entrance of the servant with another course interrupted the conversation. Dina cut the breast of a chicken on her plate without tasting the tempting morsel. When the man left the room Gueméné watched her in trembling suspense. "What was she going to say?" he asked himself, as his thoughts reverted to the passion for medical science he had seen in her; "would it succumb to that other passion of love that had entered her life?"

"His demand does not surprise me," said Dina at last.

"But, Dina!" cried Thérèse excitedly. "Have you realised what it is he is asking of you? Think it over!"

"I have thought it all over! If he had not asked me to give up medicine, I myself would have proposed it!"

"What!" cried Thérèse indignantly. "Give up your science, your profession—all that you have worked to acquire; your future as a distinguished woman—all lost, effaced, by the selfish wish of a man!"

"It is my duty, nevertheless," replied the young girl. "Yes, despite all you say, it is my duty. It is only right; I am poor, and I am not beautiful, I am dressed like a beggar: when I pass through the street no one deigns to look up. Pautel is rich, he is highly appreciated. Every one admits that he has a brilliant future; he is free, happy in his own country; he can make a splendid marriage—and he takes me for his wife! He will be no longer free, he will not be richer, because he has married a wife who cannot help his future, since she has no great and powerful relations to assist him

by their influence, and in the face of all this should I refuse when he asks me to be all-in-all to him? No. It is natural that he should ask me to give up my profession; to devote my whole life to him."

"Natural!" repeated Thérése, then, carried away by her excitement to say many unjust things. "Has not a married woman the right to exist as an individual being, to complete her development, to follow her tastes, to preserve her personality? Is it right that in marrying she should renounce the career she had begun as a young girl?"

"That is very true of her rights," answered Dina gently; "but are there not her duties as a wife? For myself, I have seen much of him, and when he marries me I shall accept all and love him. I believe that we are not the equal of man; we are only his 'help mate' as they say in Russia; the reason we exist is to aid man to live and be happy...."

"To be their slaves, then?" said Thérèse scornfully.

"Oh! I do not use big words; I say simply 'wife,' which signifies the woman who carries that title is pledged to the man. The French use the word 'vowed,' or 'dedicated' too, in that case."

The doctor was deeply moved.

"But, Mademoiselle Skaroff, a woman-doctor can be devoted to her husband. I am glad to see you so generous to Pautel: he will be grateful to you for having complied with his wish. But, nevertheless, I believe that the practice of medicine does not prevent a woman from fulfilling her duties as a wife."

He had not finished speaking when the door opened, but it was not Leon who entered, it was Rose, the old cook, cap on the back of her grey hair—tall, her large waist bound by the strings of her blue apron. She came

to serve the lobster: she was so stout that she was obliged to hold the dish with extended arms. She placed it on the table; and then, with an air of offended dignity, she explained:

"I have come to make my excuses to Monsieur. It appears that Monsieur does not like the *déjeuner* that I have prepared. Monsieur will believe me when I say that I am very sorry, especially as Madame has been so hard upon me. I cannot guess what Monsieur would like, although Madame has told me that Monsieur never eats lobster or cold chicken; but I forget orders, things fly out of my mind. Monsieur Herlinge could tell you, when I served the parents of Madame, that he had never a word of fault to find with me about the cooking... it was always a nice little word of compliment each day; but there it was different from here. Madame Herlinge gave all the orders; she was always at home to tell us what to do."

Gueméné stopped her abruptly.

"Very well, Rose, I understand the reason; say no more."

But Thérèse blushed as though her honour had been attacked.

"Those old servants are intolerable," she said, with a shrug of the shoulders. "That woman has served my mother for ten years. She believes that she is privileged to say and do what she pleases. It will be impossible to keep her."

Then, seeing the empty plate of her husband:

"Ah! my poor darling! My poor darling! How grieved I am to see you have had nothing to eat." A painful silence hung over the room. Dina tried to make a pleasant diversion by telling of the meeting with Adeline.

"We met Monsieur Adeline a while ago; he was taking

a walk with his children. Do you know where he had taken those little ones ? to visit the *Morgue*, doctor—the *Morgue*."

She laughed heartily as she thought of the predicament of " the good Monsieur Adeline " with that unruly band of children on his hands. He had taken the time set aside for his lunch to make that solemn excursion to the Morgue. Distracted by the pranks of the four little scholars on their holiday, he seemed like a widower who suddenly finds himself bound to look after his children. Awkward and miserable, lacking in the knowledge of how to deal with children, he tries to sustain the rôle of both parents, and ends in being neither the one nor the other, in his alternate violence and weakness and lack of authority.

" Yes," continued Mademoiselle Skaroff, " people call him a widower. His wife is there, however, and so good, the poor doctoress! but her *métier* is overwork. She is called out at all hours of the day and night: how can she attend to the welfare of her family ! "

" All women-doctors have not four children," cried Thérèse, secretly irritated with the turn the conversation had taken.

A frown clouded the face of Gueméné, who tugged silently at his moustache. He had grown pale. The probability of Thérèse becoming a mother—his hope and her dread—was a thorny question in that young household. By a tacit consent, they avoided speaking on the subject of a child. That latent cause of discord was a source of fear to the young wife; she accustomed herself to fear it less, and time rolled on without giving her what is called " *des espérances*."

" As for me," declared Dina, " I adore children."

" We exist for the family," said Gueméné dreamily. " It is a powerful instinct, that desire for descendants—

the wish to continue to live after death in the beings created through our love. The heart has, like the flesh, its inevitable needs!"

"With four young demons like those of Adeline," said the Russian girl with a laugh, "a wife would have her desire for love completely fulfilled. And that good doctoress; I am sure she follows willingly the call of her profession."

"It is extraordinary, Dina, how you can speak so lightly of that profession for which I believed you full of enthusiasm," said Thérèse. "I have seen you this very morning full of the passion of work, and now in one hour you turn your back upon it."

"I loved my *métier*; that is very true. I gave all my time to it. It was my safeguard. It nourished me. It was my husband, you understand; but when I found that a woman desires more—that she needs love. Ah! I would be mad to resist. . . . Am I not right?"

There was the ring of a bell below. It was the door bell. Gueméné looked at his watch. "One o'clock," he said, "some one comes for a consultation. Pshaw! My patients begin to arrive. I have had nothing to eat but dessert!"

At that instant Leon entered.

"It is Dr. Pautel, who wishes to speak with Monsieur."

Thérèse and her husband smiled. The doctor said:

"Pautel has come to consult me: he is very ill. . . . Will you go to him, Mademoiselle Skaroff, and give him a consultation—for the case in question you will be more skilful."

"My first consultation, then," said Dina, rising from the table.

She was pale, yet radiant; her beautiful eyes shone superbly under the masses of wavy hair, as she repeated:

"And my last! . . ."

The intoxication of the sacrifice she was about to make for her love changed the poor girl in her worn, shabby robe into a woman of incomparable charm. Tranquilly she shook the crumbs from the folds of her skirt with her usual care, and walked towards the door with that graceful, dancing step. Before she disappeared she smiled back on her friends as they explained:

"On the second floor, the door to the right; you will find him there. . . . We let you go to him alone."

"Come and join me in five minutes," she said.

The doctor and his wife finished the meal in silence. A feeling of sadness fell upon them. Both were thinking of the mystery of the beautiful betrothal at that moment being consummated under their roof. Those happy lovers were joyous, calm, without a cloud between them. And they thought of those two once so melancholy—that strange Dina, who was ready to sacrifice her glory, her science, her personality, her freedom with the simplicity and trust of a little child. These comparisons weighed painfully on the spirits of Thérèse and Fernand.

"Shall we go to them?" asked her husband.

"Let them be together a little longer," said Thérèse.

. . . . . .

A half hour later they opened the door of Fernand's study. The eyes of Pautel were red under the glasses of his spectacles. Dina's delicate cheeks still bore the proud blushes of her first kiss. They were holding each other's hands like the simple betrothed of the people. Gueméné and his wife bestowed their affectionate congratulations. It was a singular picture those two presented: the young man cool and unemotional, and the girl in her cotton gown standing with joined hands like peasants in a photograph. Dina Skaroff was no longer

an insignificant young girl, destined to live in the obscurity of her country. The little Princess of Science, who for months had walked the Parisian hospitals in the austerity of her white livery of the outdoor student, had resigned the promise of her talent, effaced herself in the shadow of a man. The doctors would see her no more. She glided slowly into the abyss of oblivion. Thérèse found all this as sad as an *enterrement*, but she forced herself to say the things expected through her natural courtesy.

"You are lucky, Pautel. Yes, you are very lucky! And you, Dina, you will not draw a blank. There! you will make a charming couple. Is it not so, Fernand?"

She turned to seek the eyes of her husband. Gueméné had disappeared. She stretched her head towards the adjoining room, his cabinet of work; it was empty.

"Where is Fernand?" she exclaimed.

Then, under the pretext of leaving the lovers together for another *tête-à-tête*, she descended to the dining-room and called her husband. The servants were clearing away the table. They believed that Monsieur was upstairs. Without knowing why, Thérèse felt her heart sink. She ran up the stairs to the second floor, so quickly that she was out of breath.

Fernand was in their bedroom before the window. He was panting, the hands clenched, and trembling violently.

"What is the matter? My God! What is the matter with you?" she cried in alarm.

He did not answer. She saw his features convulsed. He took her in his arms and, pressing her in a fierce embrace, while his eyes shone with a terrible emotion of sadness, said in a choking voice:

"I also. I would wish you all for myself!"

END OF BOOK II

BOOK III

I

IN June the event most talked of in the medical world was the election of Boussard to the Academy of Science. He was fully forty-six years old. His books on *Thérapeutique*, and above all his last work, *La Thérapeutique des Maladies du Rein*, opened to him the doors of the Institute. They did not know exactly why he was *le dieu Des Jeunes*, but the students of the Medical School voted him a work of art in bronze, and in the afternoon, when the young men poured out from the dissecting class, they formed into groups in the little courtyard, and gave vent to their enthusiasm. His name was in every mouth, coupled with extravagant expressions of admiration after the manner of young students.

"An amazing type, dear boy!"

"*Sacre* Boussard! no longer." The general expression was replaced by an open-mouthed enthusiasm that spread from group to group.

Boussard found his great colleagues full of calm enthusiasm, that evinced itself in numerous fêtes in his honour. The Herlinges celebrated the event by giving a grand dinner to eighteen persons in his honour at their apartment in the avenue Victor Hugo.

Thérèse and her husband arrived a little late that evening, as her gown that had been ordered for that occasion was not ready. On returning from the hospital at five o'clock, after the *contre-visite*, Thérèse dispatched

her maid for the gown. There were still the sleeves to finish. The dressmaker was profuse with her excuses. "Madame Gueméné was not an ordinary customer; she had missed three fittings; the delay was unavoidable." The cab was waiting at the door, and the two work-women accompanied the maid with the unfinished robe. They finished the robe on Thérèse by basting in the sleeves and pinning the folds together. It was a simple Princess robe of green-bronze shot silk. Thérèse's superb figure seemed to be moulded into it. She laughed merrily over the matter, saying that as she worked ten hours a day she could find no time to waste on being fitted. Fernand, in evening clothes and gloved, looked on and also laughed affectionately.

When they entered the salon, with its three great windows overlooking the avenue, fourteen persons had already assembled. There was the indistinct murmur of voices, while the warm, perfumed air was like that of a ballroom. The conversation ceased, every one arose to greet them. Thérèse drew all eyes by the fame of her talent, the youthful glory of her face and form, and the exceptional case of her position, though a married woman, as house-surgeon at the Hôtel-Dieu. The crowd fluttered around her, fascinated by her wit and beauty. The delicate yet sombre silhouette of Madame Lancelevée, who was herself always a personage in the most distinguished assemblies, attracted Thérèse's attention; then it was Artout, with his broad shoulders and dominating voice, his sixty years carried so nobly, that likewise proclaimed him a personage. He looked her over gravely, touched her lightly on the shoulder as he would a comrade, while he said in a voice that could be heard all over the drawing-room: "Well! no little one yet?"

At the same moment the heavy face and handsome

beard of Dr. Gilbertus appeared behind him. The vulgar intriguer of modern science had succeeded in procuring an invitation to the Herlinge dinner. He took the solemn pose of an actor. All the laborious efforts of the medical epoch seemed to be enclosed in that high, pale brow. Thérèse was amused to see the amiable charlatan make such a striking figure amid the great doctors of the medical world. She bowed to him, however, with the gracious dignity befitting the daughter of the great Herlinge. A radiant vision in a red silk robe advanced towards her: it was Dina Skaroff, her hair most beautifully coiffed. She laughed in delight over Thérèse's surprise, which she tried to explain by saying she had not at once recognised her owing to the crowd.

"Oh! no, no, you did not know me," the young bride protested. "I have changed in some things; it is my gown that deceived you."

She emphasised the words "some things." Thérèse thought her a delicious picture: she was like an exotic flower in her red silk gown; the sparkling eyes under the masses of wavy hair were not those of the little Russian student of former days. In her hat guiltless of trimming and shabby skirts of cotton, she was then the young "intellectual," but now all that was changed. In the strains of the wedding march her sacrifice was forgotten. She only valued herself now as the possession of her husband.

"He is there, at the end of the drawing-room," she told Thérèse. "Look at him, with Monsieur Gueméné and Janivot—on the left of the fireplace."

The young woman perceived the blond head and eyeglasses of Pautel and the group of doctors, listening to a controversy between Drs. Herlinge and Janivot, the specialist of insanity. Artout was standing apart in the

embrasure of one of the windows, talking with Bernard de Bunod, a tall, pale young man, very thin, with wild eyes that never for a moment let their regard stray from Madame Lancelevée; he was retailing all the medical gossip that he could recall to the young man. "That Janivot—was he not a bluffer? His *Maison de Santé* at Passy, was it not maintained by the fabulous prices asked for treatment—two pound ten per day, without counting the extras? The very audacity of the man had made him famous. After all, was not that in accordance with the methods of a *médicastre*?"

Just then the voice of Madame Herlinge was heard explaining:

"A quarter to eight, and Boussard has not arrived." She was anxious over a certain rissole enriched with shrimps and truffles, that she had personally supervised in the kitchen: it would be spoiled if the dinner did not begin at eight o'clock. She was about fifty years of age, tall and distinguished in bearing, but with a certain cold air of aloofness: her faded blond hair gave her the appearance of being younger than she was; her eyes were dull, and she spoke always in low tones. She cast subtle glances over the drawing-room to see that even the least of her guests were being entertained. She occupied an easy-chair next to the beautiful Madame de Bunod, a haughty woman, with white hair and an air of puritanical stiffness. A young woman gowned very simply in black was seated at a little distance in silence by the side of her husband. No one paid any attention to them. They were "patients," and consequently left somewhat alone in that medical reunion. Madame Herlinge seeing their neglected attitude, made a sign to her daughter, who had been taken possession of by Dina and Madame Lancelevée.

"Come here, Thérèse, that I may present you to Madame Jourdeaux."

She had an indescribable accent of maternal pride as she said:

"My daughter, Madame Gueméné, house-surgeon of the Hôtel-Dieu."

The two young women regarded one another with interest. They were equally handsome, of the same age and height; but one face was blooming with happiness while the other sweet face drooped with an air of resignation, impressed there by her care for her poor husband, who was a prey to the terrible disease of cancer.

Near the piano Madame Lancelevée was saying, "Boussard? Yes; I know him well, but I see him very rarely."

In the embrasure of the window Artout button-holed young Bernard de Bunod and persisted in entertaining him with his babbling.

"That is Morner that you see over there, stiff as a post, by the side of the elder Gueméné. He is of the same stuff as Janivot, but his excesses have made him poor. So he has turned Quack, and exploits electric plates somewhere—I do not know or care—in one of the populous *faubourgs*, while Janivot squeezes riches out of his well-to-do patients in his establishment for the 'half-dead' in Passy. But Morner might be a somebody and prosperous if he would let the drink alone. He was a very promising pupil of mine."

The uncle Gueméné was in a corner of the drawing-room. He seemed absentminded, lost between the reality of the gay society in which he found himself and his thoughts of the life he led in the country, resigning himself to be one of, and yet not of, the groups around him. He had come at the wish of Thérèse, of whom he was very fond. She hoped that the company would distract him, take him

out of himself for the moment; but there was no longer anything in common between him and the world. His weary look, his drooping shoulders, expressed his profound detachment from such scenes. But when his glance fell upon the sick man he went to him, drawn by that passion of pity which moved his heart for the suffering. Then the silence of Jourdeaux was turned into loquacity. He knew that his interlocutor was a doctor, and he hastened to explain that he was the victim of cancer of the liver. He was flattered to interest a professional, and offered himself as a "case," giving the history of his disease with all its complex bearings.

The eyes of the widower, usually so cold and indifferent, became extraordinarily soft as he fixed them on the face of the poor man.

"A cancer, Monsieur? . . . And who has told you? . . . What doctor can diagnose exactly a cancer of the liver?"

"I have read the medical books on the subject, and I have drawn my own conclusions," sighed the poor man.

"And if in one year you were cured?" asked Uncle Gueméné gravely, with the reserve of authority and at the same time an air of infinite compassion.

An inexpressible joy lit up the cadaverous face and lifeless eyes of Jourdeaux. The figure of Eugène Gueméné stood before him like the symbol of hope; a wave of new strength seemed to flow over the poor incurable from that man, who appeared to him a veritable god in his strength and power to heal. He listened breathless as Gueméné continued:

"I have known a case similar to yours, Monsieur; and, despite all the prognostics, the patient is to-day perfectly healed."

Gueméné did not finish the sentence. Every one had ceased speaking. A solemn silence fell upon the room:

he turned to see the cause of it. A tall, frail man had just entered the drawing-room, and was advancing slowly to salute the hostess. It was Boussard.

Herlinge, Artout, and Janivot went to him and shook his hand warmly. Then followed a general confusion, every one pressing forward and talking at once. The young men, Gueméné and Pautel, greeted him with great deference. Then the presentations were made. The great man bowed with marked gallantry over the hand of Madame Lancelevée. She received his homage in silence, and drawing aside her spreading train of black velvet, went back to the end of the room to rejoin Dina, who had timidly remained in her corner. She took up the thread of their interrupted conversation :

" And you do not regret anything—the sacrifices you have made—dear Madame. You are happy ? "

" Oh ! yes, very happy. My husband thanks me every day, but I tell him that it is not worth his thanks."

Boussard adjusted his monocle and looked searchingly at the doctoress, then, leaning towards Artout he asked, " Was she not one of the ninety-eight students at Beaujon, in your class, and is she not, owing to her coolness and courage, called by your pupils ' Morphine ' ? "

" You are right," replied Artout, repressing a smile. " That is a woman of merit, and I hold her in great esteem. We can no longer *blaguer* the women-doctors, my dear boy."

The dinner was announced ; Madame Herlinge said :

" The doctoress Adeline has not arrived, but she begged me not to wait for her."

She took the arm of Artout. Boussard offered his to Thérèse who, as they passed into the adjoining dining-room, seized the opportunity of asking her illustrious confrère a question on an absorbing medical subject. The

host conducted Madame de Bunod. Madame Herlinge as she passed her son-in-law whispered in his ear, "Madame Jourdeaux, she is back there."

Fernand sought her out and presented his arm. She had scarcely posed her hand on his sleeve when she began:

"You are the son-in-law of Madame Herlinge; you are a doctor. Am I right, Monsieur?"

The answer of Gueméné filled her with a sense of confidence in him. She at once plunged into the history of the case of her unhappy husband. With the same eagerness of despair she clung to any one who carried the title of doctor. The Herlinges had made their acquaintance when at Vichy the year previous. Madame Herlinge was deeply interested in the sympathetic young woman, who on her side had made every effort to gain her friendship. Madame Jourdeaux was absorbed by one sentiment: pity for her husband.

The flood of light in the dining-room brightened the rare flowers, lent an added sparkle to the silver, the crystal, and the gilded porcelain, and converted the table into a dazzling expanse of snowy linen garnished by glittering cutlery and the rich hues of monster fruits in the massive centre-piece. An atmosphere of festivity spread through the room. While the guests were seeking their places, Madame Jourdeaux looked about in quest of her husband. She saw him at the extreme end, between Janivot and Madame Lancelevée. When all were seated, amid the rustling of the ladies' silken robes and the scraping of the chairs on the polished floor, she pointed him out to Gueméné.

"There is my poor husband, doctor, at the opposite end of the table."

Madame Herlinge had on her left Artout, and on her right Boussard was seated. The host found himself

between Madame de Bunod and the doctoress Lancelevée. The men were more numerous than the women; a block of four composed the end of the table: they were Janivot, Pautel, Gilbertus, and Morner. The two last were invited occasionally to dinner, as their parents were old friends of Herlinge, and for the sake of the old people they had been included in the list of guests on this momentous occasion.

The soup was served, and little by little, above the gentle clashing of spoons the sounds of conversation began. Artout, who had overheard the scientific words exchanged between Gueméné and Madame Jourdeaux, exclaimed in his big voice:

"People nowadays are astonishing. With all they learn now from newspapers, we are done for. My word! they snub us without ceasing. They know more than we do about their diseases. They dispute with us and give us the reasons for consultation on their case. Those reviews on works of physiology and therapeutics that are published simply to delight their readers should be prohibited. And why? What remains for us if our patients think they know as much as we do?"

Madame Jourdeaux raised her dark eyes and gazed at him in alarm; but the simple man laughed like a boy, notwithstanding his terrible air and fierce voice. She was reassured, and continued the history of her husband's sufferings. Gueméné drew near her and listened kindly to her questions. Herlinge and Madame Bunod answered the outburst of Artout by defending the right of the patient to know all about his illness whether by knowledge, or the peculiar instinct called clairvoyance.

"Were you wiser, doctor," demanded that cold woman with the white hair, "when your patient answered your interrogatives by declaring that 'his nerves are like a

knot on his stomach,' or, better still, ' that he felt a bar of iron there ? ' "

Under the coils of white hair the diamonds in her ears sparkled, the short sleeves of her gown revealed the elbows in a flood of valenciennes lace, and the bare arms, still round and beautiful; rings of opals, rubies set in diamonds, and emeralds adorned her fingers deformed by rheumatism. Her eyes never ceased their secret surveillance of her son, the pale young man sitting a little distance away, lost in his dreams.

Boussard, the hero of the day, spoke little. Thérèse tried in vain to broach the subject of diseases of the heart, a subject very dear to her. He scarcely heard, then she made a plunge and confided to him the secret of her *Thèse*. He answered briefly:

" Ah ! ah ! very curious. I congratulate you, Madame," and relapsed into his thoughts. He had received a cruel blow to the happiness of his home. He was about to bring an action for divorce. Rumour said that he was deeply affected by it. He possessed, besides, one of those minds that lack brilliancy, but are unfathomable, a mind that might be compared to a well whose surface—narrow, dull, and obscure, covers the pure waters in its unknown depths. Between him and Madame Lancelevée, seated opposite, was a long, narrow crystal vase filled with sprays of heliotrope; he extended his hand and pushed it aside that he might get a better view of her. For a moment he was free to contemplate her beauty. The doctoress was radiant that evening. Under the magnificent arch of her eyebrows the eyes flashed with ever-changing expression, now sad, now tragic, but always magnetic in their soulfulness. Janivot was struck by her charm.

" What age do you think she is ? " he asked Pautel, seated near him.

As the fish was served, the loud laugh of Jeanne Adeline could be heard on the other side of the *portière*. She entered without ceremony: tugging at her gloves, her blond hair frizzed, and the stout form encased in a shabby evening gown. As the men arose she waved her chubby hands, still odorous with the scent of antiseptic soap, saying:

"No! no! keep your seats. Nobody rises for me where I go."

She managed to squeeze into a seat beside Artout and Madame Herlinge, who did not in the least dread her blunt good humour and plain speaking. The servant brought the soup while she told of her twelve visits of the afternoon, her round of calls in the rue de Buci, after which she went home to "clean herself up."

"And here I am," she concluded, "after taking a cab in order not to be too late!"

Every one understood that the luxury of a cab absorbed the price of one of her visits of the afternoon.

Then the conversation became general; it fell upon the subject of women-doctors. Certainly the work almost exceeded the strength of a woman; the modern physicians gave proof of an energy and will totally unknown to the preceding generations. The end of the table where the four men sat side by side was in an uproar. Gilbertus gallantly declared that no other mission was more suitable to women; the doctoress was for him the modern incarnation of the sister of charity. The poor Jourdeaux, from his place beside Madame Lancelevée, made an effort to say "how encouraging it would be to be nursed by the ladies." But Janivot, on the contrary, had the impertinence to declare, in the presence of the young women, his confrères, that it was "an abomination"! Owing to the frontal lobe of woman being less voluminous than

that of man, she could not rival man in a scientific career. Women are susceptible beings, bundles of nerves that quiver and vibrate at the least touch. Woman would play the mischief with science, prejudice it, compromise it. Then woman is dogmatic by nature, capable of recording in her brain the teachings that she comprehends in her narrow-minded way; but she is incapable of growing broader in view, of adapting herself to new cases, of thinking rationally by logical deductions.

"Women assimilate books," he exclaimed amid the uproar around the table and the indignant protestations of Thérèse. "Women have not the power to think originally —they can never invent; and the real doctor is by nature an unwearying inventor—always on the watch."

"He is right," cried the comical doctoress Adeline, as she raised her two fat hands and applauded vigorously. "He is right, look at me a moment, you who protest, and tell me then what is my head in comparison to that of Monsieur Artout!"

"Sisters of charity! Gilbertus, you are humbugging me," continued Janivot, excited over the animated interest taken in his declarations by the diners; "but, will you ask the ladies if their curiosity is not stronger than their feelings? Ask them if they are not excitable. Ask them if they do not weep. Ask them, above all, why they wish to become nurses, doctors, and if it is only human pity that prompts them to such ambition."

"Bravo!" cried Madame de Bunod, who hated Madame Lancelevée for the passion she had inspired in her son.

Artout opened his mouth and roared with laughter, as he beat the table with his fork. He was highly amused over the daring opinions that Janivot cast with such shameless impudence into the faces of the doctoresses present; he was enchanted, and would refute nothing;

he let the racy imagination of Janivot run riot and enjoyed hugely the general amazement. The Master Herlinge appeared less satisfied. His blue eyes flashed with an angry light in his pale, emaciated face. He was proud of his daughter, and the conversation, far from diverting him, filled him with secret irritation.

"The President and his family do not share your opinion, Janivot," he said finally. "They place the most absolute confidence in Madame Lancelevée."

The odour of the grilled meats, the game spiced with the aromatic mint, hung in the air. The heat of the lights developed the captivating perfume of the full-blown flowers, the cakes and creams emitted the sweet scent of vanilla, and amid all the hubbub of confused voices, the solemn butler went about his duties of carrying the dusty bottles, gliding the necks discreetly between the diners as he called at regular intervals.

"Château-Laffitte; Pomard——"

Artout stretched his head to meet the eyes of Janivot, as he cried in his cheery tones:

"As for the frontal lobe, my boy, I put that of the charming ladies above certain masculine lobes. I know, you understand!"

Then Boussard, who had not yet spoken, joined in, saying slowly in that sympathetic voice that endeared him to the women:

"With children, they are perfection, before the birth—during—and after. We have discovered now that they are admirable auxiliaries. As for me, I render them all homage!"

Then, as if seized with a sudden shyness for having spoken, the celebrated man drank hastily of the glass of water by his plate.

"Oh!" responded the doctor of lunacy, fearing that

he had gone too far, "to every rule there are exceptions. Witness the ladies here present; it is not alone their beauty that interests me."

Boussard straightened himself and raised his head; the bald temples shone like the polished marble of a divine statue; his grey eyes, thoughtful and soft, swept the group around the table, with their steady gaze. Every one felt that he was about to speak—to tell them something impressive. A reverent silence followed, broken only by the monotonous voice of the butler:

"Château-Laffitte; Pomard."

"There is here," he began, "a young woman whose history I know. She was a confrère, studious and courageous, who came to the hospital class—a stranger, if I remember rightly. She was pointed out to me as a remarkable student. She is no longer a student. She has married one of us and has given him the proof of her love by renouncing her ambition, her vanity. That young woman has shown herself a great woman in her sacrifice, which was not an easy one."

Madame Herlinge leaned towards Boussard and pointed out the subject of his remarks sitting between Bernard de Bunod and Uncle Gueménè. It was Dina, who smiled and blushed with pleasure. Her soft eyes, like the antelope, were fixed on Pautel, while she repeated, as on the first day:

"Oh! It was only right. Yes; it was only right!"

Then every one felt that Boussard had done a kind act and turned their attention to Pautel, who had a moment of veritable triumph. He bore their admiring scrutiny with his usual enigmatical air; his near-sighted eyes sparkled under the spectacles: it was to him that his wife had sacrificed her glorious future. His clinic in the rue St.-Severin for the treatment of heart diseases was

already well spoken of. Already success was crowning that pretty love story—that poetic and sensational conquest of a woman-doctor who descended from the heights of science to the obscure life of a good wife. He had inherited all her glory. He had extinguished that new star that was rising on the medical world, had taken to himself all the luminous light of her splendour.

He said with that joyous frankness bestowed on him by his happiness:

"I hope to love my wife so much that she will never regret what she has given me."

Then Boussard turned to Thérèse, and said in a low voice:

"Do not see a reproach, dear Madame, in my admiration for the sacrifice of that young student. You will one day come to that—make the same sacrifice!"

"Come to that! I? Never, doctor!" cried Thérèse with stubborn passion; "never!"

Fernand was unhappy. The apotheosis given to Pautel by that dinner speech, which made of him a hero, recoiled on Fernand. His conjugal happiness seemed to diminish before that of his comrade. He had obtained nothing—not a concession, not the least renouncement. And the torture that he suddenly experienced in being present at that ovation proved to him the initial flaw in his union. He experienced it for the first time by the fragments of phrases that he caught from Thérèse's conversation with Boussard on the condition of married doctoresses, on the rights of wives and the professional rights of women. He felt his spirit revolt against her theories. He had not supposed her capable of such ideas, and yet she also had accepted the yoke that levelled all lovers. A fierce anger against the fate that entangled him seized him as though an enemy had grasped his throat. He suffocated under that repressed rage. Then it was that he turned

with renewed appreciation to his sad neighbour. He had not found her very intelligent heretofore; but he was touched by that indiscreet consultation during the dinner, when she had extracted bit by bit his opinion on the malady of her husband, with the thinly veiled intention of securing his services, if agreeable to him. She, on her side, divined subtly what he endured, and began in her gentle voice:

"Dr. Boussard has not said all. A business woman needs the love of her husband, despite her professional duties. She is not appreciated by an ordinary husband."

Then she went on to tell of her meeting with Mademoiselle Herlinge two years previously, at Vichy—how she admired her. Ah! a man should be very proud of such a wife. What a beautiful union it would be. She, herself, would love to be a doctoress, that she might cure her poor husband! . . . Her eyes sought the other end of the table, where Jourdeaux sat making his dinner on milk.

Madame Herlinge took no part in the conversation; she listened with one ear, eating very little; her grey eyes kept a furtive watch on her guests. She scrutinised the plates, the glasses, the bread, then the faces; and the expression of gratified appetite on every visage when a particularly delicious course was served flattered her secret pride in the dinner. The butler and the maid assisting in the service kept their eyes constantly on her, as she gave her orders in discreet glances that formed a sort of mysterious telegraphy between mistress and domestics. A sense of supreme content reigned over the diners under the enchantment of that perfectly served banquet. Herlinge was delighted. He was proud of two things—his grand dinners and his famous diagnoses. The former were talked of in the city; they rendered him superior in position to Boussard, who really surpassed

him in ability and scientific discoveries, but could not entertain, or give dinners, owing to the trouble with his wife: he had no home to invite people to, an incomparable table such as Herlinge enjoyed. When a guest expressed pleasure in the succulence of a rissole, he beamed with gratified vanity, while the enjoyment of her guests compensated Madame Herlinge for the care and worry over the courses of the menu, the preoccupation and fatigue of the eight days devoted to the preparations for the grand dinner in honour of Boussard that her duties as the wife of a great man had inflicted upon her.

Under the excitement of having dined well, the table grew noisy, a dispute arose between Artout, Herlinge, and Janivot on the one part, and Boussard on the other, as to serotherapy in the treatment of consumption. The three first advocated the value of applying the vaccine of the monkey to man. Boussard, on the contrary, cited facts against its use. Then, Thérèse very audaciously took part in the discussion: young and enthusiastic, she did not hesitate to proclaim her faith in the serums, against the judgment of her elders. She raised her voice and compelled attention. Her eyes shone with the fervour of her faith, her sincerity, and her eloquence. She outtalked Janivot, her father, and the old Artout himself. After all, she had proved her right to say something of the serum of monkeys. She had procured a specimen, thanks to a comrade of the Hôtel-Dieu, an assistant of the Faculty, which she herself injected into a little white rabbit. The inoculation was successful.

Boussard sustained her: he spoke quietly, giving his arguments with more logic, proving them by the analysis of the blood; he affirmed with certain reserve the grounds for identity between the man and the chimpanzee . . . his words supported those of the young woman, giving

to her very feminine speech the appearance of strength. The dream of Thérèse was realised. All her youth she had dreamed of discussions with savants, as their equal, and of forcing them to recognise and accept her intellectual personality. Then, encouraged, she spoke of her *Thèse*. She had sacrificed a yellow cat to it that had already done good service in her work in the laboratory. It was, she believed, the only example made. She showed her hand clawed in more than one place. She had the vanity of a bewitching woman and the cruelty of a panther. Every one congratulated her on her bravery. And, seeing that she had captivated the doctors, she went on to describe her experiments in the inoculation of scarlatina on guinea-pigs, rats, and rabbits. All succumbed at different intervals according to their case. The cat survived. By a clever trauma she had provoked in the animal a lesion of the heart, endocarditis consequentive to the scarlatina. Since then she had tried a new therapeutic, but that was her secret. Victoriously she looked at Janivot. Dare he now affirm the inferiority of her frontal lobe ?

Madame Lancelevée remained silent. She had heard and seen many strange things that evening. She was thinking jealously of the success made by Thérèse. Artout proclaimed in his big voice that "the little Gueméné was absolutely amazing." Gilbertus, in his usual exaggerated style, did not hesitate to declare "that the brain of women contained perhaps the great scientific mysteries of the future." Morner found it very amusing to find a woman work to that extent. Madame de Bunod complimented the father, while the excellent Jeanne Adeline expressed her views with animation to Fernand, who sat beside her :

"Ah, that was beautiful ! that was wonderful ! Your wife is a jolly good fellow, my boy !" And Boussard crowned the compliments by his word of praise, saying :

"You give a good example to the young men, Madame."

The Doctoress Lancelevée also possessed a laboratory. She practised bacteriology. The public did not know much about her, beyond a portrait of her, wherein she was seen in a white blouse, seated before a table covered with medical phials and holding in her hands a struggling guinea-pig. She was silent. The company believed that she was annoyed, but only Bernard de Bunod, looking very white, and secretly clenching his teeth as he watched Boussard, divined the reason of the silence of that impenetrable woman. When the dessert was finished all adjourned to the drawing-room for the coffee. Every one was talking of Thérèse. The ladies arose and shook out their silken skirts, while the men displaced the chairs and offered the arm. Madame Jourdeaux being left behind, was looked after by Gueméné, who took her to her husband that she might hear how he was. The young man stood alone and silent, looking at his wife. She was disputing with Boussard, radiant with pride, beaming with satisfaction. Artout was beside Madame Herlinge, who was evidently speaking to him of her daughter, as he made a gesture of tapping the forehead to indicate all that Thérèse carried there. The mother was exulting under the cold exterior of the hostess. Gueméné saw her ring the bell for the maid and give her an order. The girl returned bearing an elegant casket. Madame Herlinge opened it and exhibited the copybooks written by Thérèse when a child. Carried away by her maternal pride, she read in a loud voice to the little circle, which comprised Artout, Madame de Bunod, the Jourdeaux, Pautel, and the Uncle Gueméné, an exercise on style that had been written by Thérèse when eight years old on the maxim: "All that glitters is not gold." Every one pronounced it marvellous.

After the coffee, the men went to smoke in the cabinet

of Herlinge. The question of serotherapy was agitated anew. The eternal obstacle in science was the impossibility to feel one's way on sure ground. Consequently the necessity to resort to vaccinations retarded success. They spoke of doctors who had inocculated themselves with the toxines. Pautel advocated the idea of experimenting on criminals condemned to death. A warm discussion ensued. Some found the proposition one of horror. "*Impossible.*" Others held that the outcasts of society would perish usefully for the common good. New points of medical casuistry passed in review. The fumes of the cigars filled the air of the room, the books in their red and gold bindings, round the room, relieved by the grey linen of the scientific pamphlets, gleamed through the light fog. The sound of passing carriages on the avenue entered by the open windows. In the stretch of sky visible above, the constellation of Cassiopeia inscribed in points of gold a gigantic *alpha* on the heavens. Boussard, with his subtle mind, discoursed on the use of morphine to hasten the denouement of the death agony. Had they the right to consent to it? It was a subject of great anxiety to him. In the conflict between morality and humanity was the conscience capable of deciding?

"And I yield to the humanity of it," he continued, in the calm voice of a modest man. "I deliberately release them by death, thereby offending the pitiless law of morality. But in doing so, I choose to commit an act that revolts me, rather than behold the horrible suffering of the dying!"

Janivot dealt with the question much more simply.

"One is not a brute," said he, "because one can shorten the sufferings of those already on the road to death."

Artout on his side brought up the subject of *avortements*. In his specialty of accoucheur he professed what might be called the religion of infants. For him children repre-

sented an inviolable power. They were the humanity of to-morrow. The old practitioner, with the proverbial austerity of his profession, appeared like the august creator of life; like a priest of fecundity, with his customary gesture of presentation, of offering to existence the newborn. He wished to see the increase of the race, the flood of humanity submerging the earth. And when they asked him why, he answered superbly:

"There are secret laws that pass our understanding."

Pautel contended that in some cases they must not hesitate to sacrifice the infant for the mother. She is a wife as well as a mother, and belongs to her husband and the world, and for that reason she should be saved. He finished by discussing the subject passionately, having unconsciously before him his dear Dina, whom he knew to be enceinte.

Then followed stories of their youth by the doctors. Uncle Gueméné, who had studied at the *Pitié*, recalled many anecdotes. One after another related their boyish experiences. The hospitals of Paris were criticised. Lariboisière, that resembled a suburban factory; Beaujon, gloomy and confined in its narrow limits of the faubourg St.-Honoré; St.-Antoine, half-modern, half-ancient, with its air of a restored convent. The Salpêtrière, with its sumptuous walks, the palais royal of hysteria; then Tenon, the new hospital, with its cloistered close, where the crowds of pupils, clad in half black and white, followed their chief. And they recalled still others: Laennec, picturesque and classic, with its clock and chapel; the Charity, celebrated for the frescoes of the Gothic wards; the Hôtel-Dieu, solemn and imposing, with its galleries, one upon the other, that enclosed the interior court. Morner himself became loquacious; Gilbertus, caressing his long black beard, deigned to be merry.

In that group of men, excited by tobacco, Fernand

Gueméné was silent, as if the room suffocated him. He sought a seat on the window-sill; his mind was far from the talkers, as he chewed his cigar, preoccupied with an idea that had come suddenly while his wife was speaking at dinner. The blood mounted to his head; he felt a tightness of the throat; he understood nothing of the conversation going on around him: but always he heard the voice of Thérèse, hard and confident, asserting her value, relating her researches, parading her success, her position—notwithstanding her youth—among those illustrious doctors. He asked himself the question:

"What does she think of me? In what esteem does she hold me? And, after all, what was he? A poor insignificant doctor of the quarter—nothing more. What a fine figure she cut only a while ago, beside Boussard, the Prince of Science, that the German journalists came to interview from the very ends of Germany. She had dared to contradict Artout. She had reduced to silence Janivot, the rich *aliéniste*. But himself—what a poor figure he played there!"

His temples throbbed with the blood that flew to his brain. His head felt heavy. Suddenly he was conscious of his healthy and active intellectuality, that had never until then been roused by the exultation of ambition. The blow of the whip of humiliation had startled from the very depths of his being his sense of offended pride. Was he always to be a little boy beside Boussard—and to Herlinge and all the world only "the husband of a doctoress"?

He breathed deeply of the fresh air blowing from the avenue. He cared no longer for the mediocre consideration he had enjoyed here. It was a thing that never troubled him before this evening: he had been lacking in foresight through his modesty. An ardent desire for fame arose within him. He looked at Boussard, who was

smoking under the chandelier—and envied him. He envied the sixty years of the majestic Artout, against those he had bartered his youth to impose upon Thérèse a master. Why had he done this? He tried to imagine the day when he would be celebrated and she would bow before him! Did she love only herself? Who knows? . . . The tears rushed to his eyes; he turned and looked out of the window to hide his emotion.

On returning to the drawing-room he found the Jourdeaux about to go. The unhappy young wife went quickly to him. He had inspired her with an extraordinary degree of confidence in his skill. She implored him to listen to her.

"Oh, doctor, I beg of you do me the honour to tend my husband. Come to-morrow and examine him. I have been struck most forcibly this evening by many things you have said. I am convinced that you will understand his case as no other doctor has done."

Gueméné smiled, hesitated, then the husband approached.

"I know well that my account is ended," said he breathlessly; "but meanwhile, if I try a new treatment there may be hope. . . . Oh, doctor, if you would, I might recover."

Gueméné looked at him; a light shone in his eyes. Then he said as he noted down the address of Jourdeaux in the boulevard St.-Martin:

"I am very flattered, monsieur, believe me."

. . . . .

When he was in the coupé with his wife, he said:

"You do not know! The Jourdeaux have asked me to call. They are certain that I will save the poor man. What would you say if I cured him?"

Thérèse sat up in the corner and burst into a laugh:

"Cure a cancer! my poor darling. Are you mad?"

II

A GREAT heat ushered in the summer: the Island of St.-Louis appeared in the distance like a gigantic basket of verdure posed above the waters. It seemed to be an oasis of freshness in the furnace of the quays, but the dense masses of the Italian poplars enclosing it rendered the air suffocating. The Seine was a great bath, wherein the sunlight sparkled merrily all day. The façades of the houses teemed with the reflected heat of those fiery rays. The river seemed a flood of molten fire. Gueméné's dwelling was situated at an angle that exposed three sides of it to the sun, thereby rendering the heat unbearable. The sun seemed fairly to devour it. In the morning it caressed it with slanting gleams; at mid-day it embraced it with the full strength of its light, blistering the paint of the walls in its ardour; by four o'clock it shone, above the towers of Notre-Dame, into the bedrooms, and then slowly descended the sky without sparing the narrow façade of the little dwelling; from seven to eight o'clock it was still on view in the western horizon, its fiery gleams filtering through the branches of the poplars and painting little blood-red moons on the wall paper. And during all this fusillade of sunshine there was no truce from the noise of the passing *bateaux-mouches* of the river, or the thud of their screws continually turning like a mill, or the incessant fluttering of the pigeons awaiting the setting of the sun to seek rest in the cooling foliage.

Fernand went to and fro on the island at all hours, now

a-foot, now in a cab; he crossed the bridge of Louis-Philippe, the Marie, or the Tournelle to gain the left side of the river. He groped his way up and down the dark staircases of the old houses, striking matches to guide him in search of the doors of the poor chambers where his patients dwelt. There seemed to be no end to his work that season, which, with the heat, wearied him beyond endurance. He was haunted by visions of far-away Brittany. He thought of the heath golden with bloom, the dogberry covering like a tower the square galleries, or the dim, cool silence of the forest of Druid oaks, or the blue mouth of the wide, mysterious ocean. He longed to be off, away from the glare and the dust, the unceasing noise of the carts on the quay of Flowers opposite, that grated on his tired nerves each morning, and awoke him from dreams of his beloved Brittany.

He had confided to Thérèse his longing to get away—to be off for a vacation and change of scene; but she, fascinated by her studies, had implored him with tender caresses to give her a further delay. She was passionately engrossed on her *Thèse*, and had not the courage to interrupt the preparations. Only another six weeks and the work would be terminated. She was at present making observations in the classes. That ended, they would go for a little holiday to rest and recruit. She was somewhat imperious in her sweet way about her right to work, and Gueméné had scruples over the matter; he feared being unjust to Thérèse, and in his admiration for her work allowed his wish to be overruled as well as his authority. He did not force his right as a husband and demand her obedience, in view of the important work she had on hand; he submitted with the determination to assert his authority later.

July passed; Thérèse scarcely left the laboratory at

the Hôtel-Dieu. Her ward contained four old women, upon whom she practised in the study of heart disease. One of the women died. Thérèse made the autopsy alone, and with deep enthusiasm. Her examination of the heart was long and exhaustive. She sent one of the hospital servants to bring her *déjeuner*, which she ate in the ward. She was in an indescribable state, covered with blood from her nails to her elbows, and could not take a pen to write a little note of explanation to her husband.

Her laboratory swarmed now with little animals of all sorts. On shelves were arranged the five bowls containing nests of white cotton, in which the restless white mice awaited experiments. The rats rubbed nervously with their pink muzzles the glass partitions of an aquarium. Between the four legs of a table was lodged the box of guinea-pigs. Some were inoculated or ill, and had rolled themselves into balls of tawny fur; the others, well and healthy, were sitting quietly on the straw, their little fore-paws engaged in the serious business of their toilet; five beautiful fat rabbits were chewing carrots in their cage under the stove, while the pretty cat with heart-trouble slept, curled up at the bottom of a basket.

Thérèse cultivated the bacilli in bouillon-soup, milk, and the sugar of potatoes; the phials of various shapes containing those thick, mysterious liquids packed the shelves. With the slender, beautiful fingers of the well-bred girl, that were suited to the manipulation of the reels of thread in delicate lace-work, or the needle and silken flosses of embroidery, she handled fearlessly the terrible bottles filled with the heavy fluids of toxins and human flexons. She enjoyed to the full her formidable power over typhoid, pneumonia, scarlatina, diphtheria, and the hidden monsters of tuberculosis. She felt that she had the mastery over death.

Her work was so interesting she could not tear herself away from it. Under the direction of her father, she treated heart troubles by the ice treatment, and obtained unhoped-for results. She was assiduous in her care of the old woman, giving no one the chance to study the case. She alone applied the ice and stethoscope one after the other on the gasping thorax, thereby making observations that were a great assistance towards the writing of her *Thèse*. Her work in the hospital was so engrossing that she lunched in the ward each day to save time, as she found that when taking that meal at home, Fernand detained her through his tardiness. Many times she awaited his return, fretting over her enforced idleness, and begrudged the hour wasted in talk over the dessert which prevented her return to the hospital before half-past two. The new arrangement of lunching in the ward gave her quite two hours to the good. It is true she feared her husband would not like this arrangement, but he made not the least objection or showed himself uncomfortable over it. He acquiesced in all her wishes since the famous dinner of the Herlinges. She saw this, and attributed it to the influence of the attitude of her great confrères towards her on that occasion. She gloried in the remembrance of it, and imagined that since that time she had gained in importance in the eyes of Fernand. As for him, he was resigned, and questioned no further the necessity for her excessive work. He had a mental reservation that enabled him to endure the lonely midday meal and the heat of the August, which was more torrid than that of July. Every one was away holiday-making. The Herlinges were travelling in Scotland, Artout was in Switzerland, and Boussard in Norway. The illustrated posters on the walls of Paris invited all the world to take a holiday. The puffs of smoke from swiftly gliding steamers on lake and

river, the speeding trains, the laughing landscapes, the mountains and rosy clouds, the peasants of Breton, the sea, all depicted in lurid colours with monster lettering announcing: Tickets, return-tickets, excursion tickets, seaside tickets, at prices so cheap it was like giving them away as invitations.

The impossibility of availing himself of these alluring chances affected Fernand, made the heat even more unsupportable, the fatigue heavier, and the desire to fly from Paris tenacious to an unbearable degree. He went from patient to patient in a state bordering on collapse—with shoulders drooping and an air of weariness. He added to his professional duties the visits three times a week to the great laboratories of the School of Medicine in the boulevard St.-Michel. There he worked in the glare of the sunlight pouring through the great bay windows. With the evening he rejoined his wife at dinner, both exhausted with heat and fatigue. In the twilight they leaned their elbows on the window-sill, seeking for a breath of fresh air, but the quivering wall of poplars made a great curtain of foliage that absorbed the air and almost suffocated them. Neither spoke of going away as they mused, pressed close together, passionate and mute, like two buds that had prematurely bloomed and were overpowered by their own strength and sweetness. When the lamps were lit they resumed their work, each at their own desk in the separate study. In sleep they were reunited, harassed, vanquished in that slumber of the overwrought. With the morning their paths again diverged.

One evening Gueméné returned home ill. He did not complain; he knew too well the professional cares of Thérèse, so different from the tender anxieties about her domestic affairs of a simple wife; therefore he made some excuse to retire early. He watched his pulse, and fell asleep with his eyes on the chronometer.

The following day he found three interesting cases awaiting him on the Bastille side of the river, in addition to that of Jourdeaux, whom he visited daily. He went out at his usual time, but an uncontrollable weakness obliged him to take a cab. He ordered the coachman to return, and on arriving at his home the symptoms increased, his limbs trembled, vertigo, accompanied by nausea and chills, attacked him. He feared typhoid, and searched the *prodromes* of the preceding days. As he mounted the staircase he was obliged to cling to the banisters. When the valet-de-chambre came to meet him, it was only by an effort that he could say:

"Put me to bed."

Then he thought of Thérèse's absence; she would be away all day, and he felt the pangs of being abandoned. When he was in bed the old servant, Rose, entered the room. She was alarmed to see him so ill, and in her good and impulsive way was about to go and fetch her mistress from the Hôtel-Dieu. But he opposed her through that sense of shyness of one who loves, but is not loved sufficiently in return; he could not let his pride be overruled by his discretion. He knew the importance of his wife's work, and how serious any sudden disarrangement in the studies of the laboratory would be. If in her enthusiasm for her work she had overlooked him, then why should he demand her presence when it would mean a sacrifice to her?

He declared to the domestics that it was nothing, only an attack of prostration owing to the heat, that would pass away with a day's quiet and rest. It was the first time since his marriage that his vigorous health was menaced by illness. He suffered more from solitude than from the light attack of fever that had seized him. All his suppressed unhappiness broke forth in an excess of grieving

as he lay alone in the silent room. The fever made him light-headed, and he fancied he saw Thérèse enter on tip-toe and glide to his bedside, offering him a cooling drink with affectionate words and kisses; she seemed to calm him by her presence, her soothing smiles and touch, the vision of her reflected in the mirror, then he fancied she was sitting by the head of the bed. He looked again, but there was nothing there. He realised that she was far away—at the hospital—that she had forgotten all about him in the engrossing occupation of distilling virus into phials.

He called her, believing that by the force of suggestion, the mysterious power of telepathy, he could bring her to him. The blood rushed to his head in that effort of the will; it beat in his ears to the rhythm of the tick-tick of the clock. A horrible sense of loneliness seized him; he tried to sleep. After a short dose he awoke; he thought it was the end of the afternoon, but the hands of the clock pointed to twenty minutes to one. From that time every five minutes he looked at the clock. During the intervals he counted the flowers on the wall-paper, and traced the fantastic faces formed by the leaves. He took his temperature, made a mental sum of all his operations in surgery, counted the muscles in a man's body, until he was overcome by the pain in his head.

In his misery he was almost tempted to send for Thérèse. Then he fell to chewing the cud of his grievances like a gourmand. He had consented to marry a student; had he not taken it upon himself to respect her work, her ambition, her profession? Could he expect from her the entire devotion that was the lot of the wife consecrated solely and wholly to her home? No. Theirs was an association which did not give him the right to impede her work. He must accustom himself to that special

conception of marriage. But what would it be the day when she became a doctor in the full sense of the word? What would the husband count in the daily life devoted to her patients, her profession of doctoress?

His thoughts, notwithstanding his efforts, returned continually to Thérèse. He imagined her by his side, the beautiful black hair spread over her pillow, framing her face with its delicate, grandly curved nostrils, under the half-closed lids the pupils shining softly. And he recalled those dear features with a despair akin to that which would have moved him had he really lost her. A feeling of rancour against her followed these thoughts. What a parsimonious love was theirs! How she reserved herself, giving only what was strictly necessary, storing the rest; always refusing to belong completely to him!

Then he reviewed the whole programme with its innumerable minute and cruel pains that she had inflicted on him since the seven months of their union. A mortal sadness fell upon him; never would he be happy; his life was broken.

At six o'clock the door opened suddenly, and Thérèse, breathless, alarmed, and very white, appeared.

"My darling! my darling! What is the matter with you?"

He raised himself on the pillow, and pressed her to his breast. In the joy of having her with him he forgot all that he had resolved to tell her.

When they were weary of kissing one another, she said sadly, reproachfully:

"Why did you not send for me? It is only two steps to the hospital."

He answered:

"I wished to cure myself, to learn to do without you. But I had no fears, Thérèse. I had no fears."

The young woman trembled, the cry of her husband touched her heart. He made no reproaches, expressed no wish, claimed no right to her time; but she felt the inflexibility of his will that would take her liberty, her force. She must defend it. She saw each day his jealousy of her study of medicine; and that susceptibility of love, that exclusiveness that would brook no rival, even in her work, flattered more than it offended her. What power must a woman have to contend without ceasing against that inexpressible wish, that latent prayer of the husband that adored her! She lived two lives, equally abundant, passionate, intense—the life of love brightening her home, and the other, the intellectual life that she cultivated so magnificently in the atmosphere of the hospital. To tear her from either one of these existences would have made her the most miserable of creatures. And during that work Fernand also worked; he wished to kill that other life with its joys, its exercise of energy, its ambitions. It was a cruel war, but there was not a day that passed that he did not pursue his object by word and attitude or complaint such as that which had just escaped him. Thérèse trembled with fear, then, each time she yielded in a burst of generosity to his desires before that other wish, that desire which would compel her to sacrifice the life intellectual. She resisted with all her powers notwithstanding the snare, the treachery against her laid by her own heart.

The following day Fernand was better, but weak from the excess of the fever. Thérèse was obliged to leave him at the hour of her visits, but two hours later she returned. He was still in bed. She said very tenderly:

"Let us go to Brittany. Do you wish it? We can leave at once."

He looked at her in surprise.

"And what about your *Thèse*? . . . and the patient

you have under observation . . . and the massages of the heart."

"My dearest," she cried, "all those things are of no importance the moment I see your health compromised. My *Thèse* makes me anxious, but there, you are ill; as for my patient, it is true it is a most interesting case, but I can pass it over to some one, and no one will perceive the gap in my observations."

Gueméné drank greedily of those words of affectionate renouncement. He was drunk with joy. He found the devotion of Thérèse magnificent.

"Oh! my love! my love!" murmured he, as he kissed her hands. "Am I worthy of thee?"

She was exultant. At last they would see whether she was a bad wife. She also would know her sacrifice; for her also the husband would take the first place. And now they would cease perhaps to cast at her those discreet, yet veiled false allusions about the example of Dina. . . .

The month of September was passed at the seaside, on the beach of the peaceful but chaotic Morgat, where Gueméné lived in a happy dream. His worries and torments had ceased. Why had he been so wickedly irritated against Thérèse? Was she not an ideal companion, ready to forget herself for him, devoted to him to the point of neglecting to profit by her attractive studies? They were never apart; they revelled in the joyous love of youth, made up of kisses and smiles. Before them the bay of Douarnenez lay in a great hollow like a gigantic circus. There they promenaded the strand and fine sands arm-in-arm, or embraced one another in the shadow of the grottoes or on the sunken roads, as they returned, while the *crozonaises*, with their picturesque caps of net, enclosing the heavy masses of hair, stopped at the mouth of the pits to watch the beautiful loving couple pass on their way.

But towards the end of that happy holiday time Thérèse was a prey to an attack of home-sickness for the hospital. The idea of her *Thèse* obsessed her as an obligation she had not fulfilled. She was preoccupied by thoughts of her experiments, her studies, and her little animals. "What had become of the grey cat, the white rabbit, and the guinea-pigs?" . . . The morning of the first of October found her at the Hôtel-Dieu. Then began a period of feverish and incessant work. It was the last year of her services as house-surgeon, and she wished to acquire all the practical knowledge that the hospital gave to the serious student; she resolved to extend her work. She went to Boussard's class at the Charity Hospital. The distance that separated the Ile St.-Louis and the rue Jacob increased her fatigue. Although the lunches at home were suspended for the time, she left the house in the morning, and only returned in the evening; to add to all this extra fatigue, her researches in bacteriology obliged her to make experiments with dogs; and as the small laboratory of Boussard did not permit his keeping large animals, she was under the necessity of working at the school of Medicine (l'École) on that branch of her experiments. The second day of her visit when ascending the staircase she met her husband.

"What are you doing here?" she cried in surprise.

That unexpected meeting with his wife filled him with joy, and there on the steps of the staircase as they looked at each other, like two startled children, he playfully revealed to her the secret in which he had revelled for months, his study of the case of Jourdeaux, and his search for the secret of the cancerous infection.

"But how?" asked Thérèse incredulously.

"No matter how," he replied, "if I discover it!"

That day they had many chance meetings; each time

they exchanged furtive kisses between the windows, and snatched a brief chat, then separated, looking back with smiles at one another every few paces. Their steps echoed in the great bare vestibule, as they sought their respective rooms—he to the hall of Therapeutics, she to that of Pathology.

Thérèse was passionately absorbed in the class of Boussard. That fathomless man, usually cold and impassive as marble, acquired a warm eloquence at the bedside of his subjects in the hospital ward. She had not realised how ignorant she really was in the art of diagnosis until she learned from him many things that were not written in books, the unpublished science resulting from personal observation of the genius of medicine, and which passed on to one, like herself, already well versed in that difficult art, made one doubly master. Boussard forged Thérèse by mastering strokes into shape for her career. She attended his class with the enthusiastic heart of the knowledge-seeker, happy in the fulfilment of her joyous quest.

One morning, when arising from her bed, she was seized by a fainting spell. Fernand, alarmed, summoned the maids. They hastened to her assistance. On reviving she dismissed them, but she rested, pale, with a strange expression of vexation in her humid eyes.

"You are suffering?" asked Fernand with tenderness.

She made a sign to say no.

"But you are ill, Thérèse. What is the matter?"

"I know what it is; the syncope has revealed it!"

She sank into the easy-chair, her hands resting feebly on her lap, while the tears slowly welled up in her eyes and dropped one by one on her cheeks. Her look of anguish pierced the heart of her husband.

"Thérèse!" he cried.

She arose and wound her arms around his neck as she wept distractedly, saying between her sobs, in broken tones of reproach:

"You wished it . . . my poor darling, you wished it. We were so happy without a child! we were all in all to each other; now . . . what trouble is before us . . . what horrible change."

Gueméné was wild with joy He seized her wrists and cried imperiously:

"No tears, Thérèse. I am overjoyed!" He trembled with happiness; he looked upon her with reverence, the exaltation of a priest before the altar of the Most High, as he repeated:

"A child! a child of yours . . . our child! . . . it is created, it lives. . . . Did you not understand? We are immortal; from this time our beings are perpetuated . . . it will be you . . . it will be us . . . it will continue our lives . . . a child of you . . . what a mystery! Oh, Thérèse, it seems that I love you even more to know that you are a mother . . . you a mother, Thérèse! a mother!"

He looked on his wife with an exaltation of wonder, as though she carried in her bosom the first descendant of the human race. In his intoxication of love and pride he said tender, inexpressible things, to which Thérèse listened with a weary air of vexation over his impetuous joy.

"You do not think of me in your simple pride of being a father. You do not feel, then, the destruction of all my dreams, and what this event will prove for me—the end of my projects, my desires, my work! . . . Is it that I am of no more importance beside this being, not yet fully formed, that has roused in you the pride of the paternal instinct? . . . Am I a free individual who has the right to choose her life, to make it, or a passive instrument submitting to the genius of species, simply a link in the human

chain ? . . . Certainly I shall love the child that will be born of me. I am not a monster. I shall love it strongly, as an animal loves its young. But if it had not been. There are days when I would not wish it. I have arranged my future. My year of work began so successfully. My *Thèse* progresses: it would have made such a sensation when I presented it. I would have accomplished my four years as house-surgeon; that finished, what would have prevented me, later, to be chief of the Hospital for Children ? The obstacle has come; it is created, as you have told me so proudly. I must send in my resignation as house-surgeon. What shall I do during this enforced idleness of nine months ? And after; will it be easy to establish my practice, with that child and the nurse. . . ."

"The nurse," said Gueméné quickly. "You will not nurse it yourself ? "

"Oh ! not that," she replied with determination: "nine months still, but not thirty-six ! "

Gueméné drew himself up as he answered definitely:

"When I accept a case of accouchement it is always on condition that the woman nurses her child if she can."

"Very well," said Thérèse in a strange tone. "I shall engage Artout."

She ceased weeping, and sank trembling into the easy-chair, incapable of resisting that overthrow of all her plans, that downfall of her hopes. He paced the floor, a silence, the silence of their first grave discord fell heavily between them, separating them effectually as though it had been a thick wall.

"Say that you have no pity for me," cried Thérèse bitterly.

He stopped before her, his lips trembling with anger as he spoke.

"Pity for you ? Because you are happy, loved, young,

and healthy; because you would bloom normally into the beauty of motherhood? Is it debasing to have a child? Is it a decay? You refuse to be an instrument in the work of life, you dispute the law of nature? . . .

"'There are secret laws of nature that pass our comprehension,' said Artout. And to resist them is nothing more nor less than immoral. To tell the truth, I ask myself what sort of being you will be, you, the intellectual, the new amazon, if you will cease to be a woman!"

She spoke slowly in the agitation that almost overcame her.

"I was independent, calm, joyous; my will was my only guide; I raised myself to an ideal, but I have consented to a bondage—a servitude. Ah! I now understand Madame Lancelevée."

She raised her eyes to her husband, and seeing how he suffered, burst into a flood of weeping.

"Forgive me, my love, forgive me," she implored, holding forth her arms. He was appeased and touched by the sight of her distress. "Forget all that I have said, I regret nothing, I love you, only understand that I suffer much to renounce the work and prospects so dear to me."

He forgave her, regained his passionate tenderness for that exceptional woman, who henceforth represented for him two loves. He inherited from his race the family sentiment in a high degree. He thought of that abnormal home that had been his, a home so different from his ideal, his dream. What a mistake his marriage had been! He was seized by a feeling of unutterable sadness.

"My poor Thérèse!" he sighed, "my poor Thérèse!"

He did not tell her of the sadness that wrapped him in the calm of resignation, the strength of endurance and resignation, his heritage from his race, that rendered him content with half a loaf when he could not have all, that

half happiness which would find compensation in renewed and greater application to work; this and the fact that his wife would be under the necessity of making arrangements for her momentary retirement barred the way to the complete confidence between them. But he found a certain measure of reconciliation to the state of affairs through his pride in the knowledge that he was to be a father. He went himself to take Thérèse's excuses to Boussard at the Charity Hospital, and it was through the warning of the great doctor that she was forced to take immediate repose. Gueméné met him as he was descending the staircase leading from the women's ward to that of the men, and the celebrated man was surrounded by his class of students, notwithstanding which, Gueméné stopped him, and whispered the good news in his ear. Boussard, who had been his master also, pressed his hand and warmly felicitated him.

"And above all," he said, "no more studies during this critical time; and another reason is that you have a sweet wife, with a prodigious intellect. She has won my deepest admiration since I have had her in my class. And now, thanks to this child, you have gained the advantage. She will give up medicine when the baby comes, after that she will open no more books."

Gueméné answered with loyal firmness:

"My wife will not abandon her profession, and through respect to her wish I shall not demand it."

He did not see the slight movement of surprise on the part of Boussard. He was, however, struck by the increased pallor, the grave sadness of that noble face above the hospital blouse, the apron, the false collar, much too high, that framed his shaven head where the sparse blond hairs glistened like a crown.

Two weeks previously Boussard had obtained his divorce.

At the age of forty-six he found himself alone, free, without a home, with the craving for a life of sentiment to replace his need of a wife. He had twenty years of vigorous manhood before him, but to crown his misfortune he suffered today from the fatigue of his experiences, the loss of his illusions and the death of his enthusiasm. For five months a woman had occupied his thoughts, she had attended his course of instruction, followed assiduously his conferences, and the hospital class. When she was absent her image was always before him. It was Madame Lancelevée, whom he had met at the Herlinge dinner, and who had produced on him a most powerful impression. The impression remained although he had tried to resist it. It was strange, but she seemed to him to have been equally impressed at that meeting. This mysterious woman appeared to seek him; they had not exchanged a word. They kept a determined distance from one another, like two fierce animals that were bent on a duel, who from afar provoked it, now defiant, now advancing, receding, measuring one another, their power, their bravery under the force of that deep and impatient passion that would end in a fierce and deadly assault, in which one of them must be victor.

Boussard had forbidden himself to dream of marriage. Instinctively he kept guard over himself: his sense of delicacy made him conduct himself like a man in mourning for his wife; for was not divorce, after all, like the blow of death to marriage? That grave man would have given the lie to all his nature if he had taken a new wife the day after his sad rupture with the first. Imperturbably he continued his scientific life. No one suspected the cloud that hung over him during those months of that unhappy contest. For many reasons he did not wish to marry a woman-doctor. He understood Pautel's view of marriage; but he could not comprehend the position of Gueméné

and for that reason he could not repress that shudder of revolt in the presence of a husband who expressed such respect for the rights of his wife.

The same day the Jourdeaux family awaited the visit of Gueméné. He did not delay at the Charity Hospital, but, taking a cab, drove at once to the boulevard St.-Martin. Madame Jourdeaux, in a cashmere dressing-gown, was seated at the bedside of her husband, busy with her piece of embroidery. Their child, the little André, exceedingly wise for his five years, was playing dominoes on the carpet; and as Gueméné looked upon that husband, already marked out by death, devoured by the *cachexie*, wracked by aching pains, despairing between his beautiful, young, devoted wife, and that *bambin* so unnaturally quiet, he envied him.

III

"WELL, my dear, it is there, a boy . . . enormous . . . he weighs eight pounds . . . the father is fairly bursting with joy and pride . . . she is strong, that little Madame Gueméné; she is vigorous enough to undertake the rearing of such a wonder. . . . As it is the 2nd of June, they have called him Jean."

Artout had made himself at home in the cabinet of Madame Lancelevée, where he was welcome at all hours. He had come to tell her the news: since four o'clock in the morning he had attended the birth of the Gueméné baby. He was proud and at the same time very weary of his work. He chose a big easy-chair and sank heavily into its inviting depths, resting his strong, *bourbonienne* head on the back of the chair. Near him the slight black-robed figure of the doctoress was seated, her slender form cheating her age by the irony of its graceful, youthful outlines, while she smiled over the enthusiasm of her master.

"Does the sun trouble you?" she asked. "I can lower the blinds."

"No, no! sunlight is health, and, besides, it gladdens me. I need gaiety. . . . *Sacré-bleu!* I do not know how you manage it, but you make this big consulting-room of yours very gay and attractive."

The cabinet of consultation of Madame Lancelevée overlooked the boulevard de Montmorency by three large windows. The lofty walls were covered with linen cloth

varnished in a light tint of blue and were sponged daily to keep them fresh and free from any taint of infection; chairs and settees of cane furnished the corners of the room, a bookcase occupied the end, while the desk with its telephone apparatus was placed between the two doors, one of which opened on to the staircase, while the other gave access to the waiting-room. The windows were veiled by snow-white muslin, thereby admitting the full power of the sunlight and rendering the room both healthy and comfortable. It was not yet half-past one, and as the consultations did not begin until two o'clock, Artout had hastened to come, after a hurried *déjeuner*, to blurt out to the doctoress, as though in defiance, the announcement of that happy event in the Gueméné family.

"You remember, my dear, that first evening of their marriage, what you told me. Did you not predict their divorce? And now a child has come to them, a round, plump, healthy little body, believe me. When I gave that little naked cherub into the arms of his mother, the big eyes opened in wonder as she looked on her baby, and she pressed her lips full on his breast in one of those kisses that I am sure she never gave her husband! You may say what you will, I have seen women in all the phases of life, and this one I have known as a little child, a young girl making her début into the medical profession. I have seen her a dreamer, full of the enthusiasm of ambition, and then a *fiancée*, loving and adorable, a bride radiant in her happiness and beauty, but, my dear, a woman is never really, completely, and integrally a woman until the moment when she looks upon the face of her first-born child. Ah! the depth of her eyes, the glory of her face in the intensity of that first kiss, which makes of her by the subtle transformation of nature a mother. . . . With each fresh accouchement that I make, I feel the joy of the mother; my heart

responds to that mysterious triumph of nature, whether I tend the bed of some charity patient of the hospital or that of a celebrated woman like the little Madame Gueméné."

The doctoress laughed as she drew up her chair and faced Artout.

"But, dear master, do you know to whom you are speaking? I also have made many accouchements and presented the little naked creatures to their mammas, and I agree with you that they make a very pretty picture. What is your object in all this talk?"

"I would tell you the truth; nothing enrages me more than to see a woman of your superiority, healthy, vigorous, beautiful, with the form and capabilities of being a mother ten times, refuse to marry and found a family."

"But, my dear master, you will grant me the right to have my reasons."

"They are of no value. . . . Are you happy through them?"

She was taken by surprise; his words struck home, more than he believed.

"But—but yes—certainly," she stammered, "I am very happy!"

"No, that is not true."

An expression of annoyance passed over her cold features; her eyes flashed.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I know women, and you in particular, my dear, with your nature, your health, your poise, you will become a being full of unsatiated longings. One does not see here a cat, not even a parroquet to pet, nothing that proclaims the sentimentality of the lonely woman.

"I have my work: I have told you that a hundred times."

"Very well, then, your work! When you give me that answer, I think of the famished Prince in the legend who sat

at a table filled with dishes of golden food that he could not eat. You also have hunger like the others, for substantial tenderness, for happiness and love, and you think that tomes and tomes on pathology will satisfy you. . . . I am sure that there are treasures in your heart."

"There is in my heart that which I have put there," she said proudly.

"My dear, I do not create difficulties where there are none; I can see things that any fool could see. You are, despite your great brain, only a girl; and a very sane and normal one. I have come from the house of a woman like you, who has given her husband the finest boy in the world, notwithstanding her profession, notwithstanding her celebrity. Yesterday I met Bernard de Bunod, who is deeply smitten with you. My word! how very easy it would be, I say to myself, for that young man to offer you his name, his great fortune, and his romantic love. What a good thing it would be for you to imitate the example of Thérèse Herlinge. . . . That Bunod is intelligent, refined, and a little of the happiness that you could give him would very quickly change him into a jolly fellow instead of the pale neurasthenic that he is to-day. Frankly, does not such love move you, touch your heart? Surely you are not made of marble!"

She answered slowly, weighing each word:

"A woman-doctor has no heart, a woman-doctor has no feeling, a woman-doctor is not a woman. The mothers of families know this so well that Madame de Bunod placed her big boy in my hands with the same religious confidence that she has in the father-confessor to whom she entrusts the conscience and spiritual guidance of her young daughter. Between us and our patients there is a tacit agreement, sacred, intangible; we are to them nothing more than doctors, as they are in our eyes merely patients. We

possess a sense of honour more delicate, more subtle than other women. Without making any vows, we live a life rigid, impassable, and severe as that of a nun. We pass through a brutal novitiate that does violence to all our sentiments, and kills in us every trace of feminine imagination. Our parents by a thousand tender artifices have kept our souls ignorant as children, and, with one brutal blow, given with all the precision of Science, life is revealed to us in all its terrible realism; for us life is stripped of its mystery, its dreams, its poetry. Science has drained us of all susceptibility. We have seen all, heard all, known all. We are no longer nervous, sensitive, or prudish, neither are we impressionable; and our very strength is gained by all these shortcomings, the lack of every feminine quality. We have acquired the right to penetrate everywhere; with the sick we are always in our right. We can sound all miseries, listen to all confessions, and when I nurse, by chance, the son of Madame Bunod, a boy of that age—a man—would you have me, in the exercise of my profession, marry the first patient that falls in love with me like a doctoress in comic opera? Truly, that would justify the harsh criticisms against us of those who uphold the old-fashioned prejudice to our calling. . . . No, no! we must forget our sex when by the bedside of a sick man, in order to run no chance of being moved or touched by natural feeling. Otherwise, what becomes of the confidence of the mothers who call us to treat their sons, or the wives who entrust to us their husbands for auscultation!"

She drew herself up with an air of cold dignity, striving to conceal under that imperturbable mien her real feelings. She was very beautiful in that attitude of defence, but her flaming cheeks, eyes aglow with passion, and palpitating bosom, gave the lie to that vigorously expressed theory of the sexless woman-doctor.

"You are astonishing," exclaimed Artout. "You are astonishing. It is curious."

He paused, and gazed upon her with that direct, penetrating stare that gauged her with the sure eye of experience. Then with the simplicity of the man of science, for whom the truth is never veiled in equivocation or hypocrisy, he said:

"Seeing that you are a woman of absolute frankness, I am going to ask you a very plain question—have you never wished to be loved? Have you no regrets? Are all your desires dead?"

"No," she answered slowly, "they are not dead." Then, with folded arms and lowered eyes she said in a voice of inexpressible power, "Sometimes they are roused."

"And then?"

"I lull them to sleep by my work."

He listened to her in surprise; never before had she betrayed herself during the course of the many discussions between them. That appeal to her frankness and truth of her old master drew from her a confession she felt was due to him to explain fully the line of action she had taken.

"You are right," she continued, "in thinking that this personality I show you is assumed and that the satisfaction I take is the result of it. I have chosen this career and I would carry it out to perfection. I have removed the most dangerous obstacle in turning my back on marriage and the family. But when I say that a woman-doctor has no heart, no feeling, I speak only of the appearances that are necessary to her professional dignity, for behind that cold exterior there is the true woman, who suffers and who would be loved."

"Then," said Artout, with a touch of emotion, "there have been dramas in your past?"

"No, but many times a great sadness and loneliness. Among the men who have loved me were some who wished to marry me. To that I would never consent. The others did not inspire me with the esteem necessary to gain my love."

"Have you ever asked yourself what you would do should you meet your ideal, the man you could love?"

"Yes!" she answered with a loyal candour that approached recklessness, "I know that I would love him!"

"Well done! Now this is something like it. There is the explanation at last to the beautiful enigma that you are. Ah! my dear girl, I like you all the better now that I know you are capable of sacrificing your proud theories for love."

"Pardon, dear master, I will never lower myself to the plane of an idler, a vain, useless woman, by giving up the career that has made me what I am, and I will never forget my principle of the incompatibility of marriage with my profession. I will love that man freely, without chains and without contract. I will not be bound by the mere formula of the marriage ceremony!"

"Oh, oh!" cried the old surgeon. "Is that the road you will go?"

"I simply follow my principles to the last extreme. Do I scandalise you? I ask you what harm can love do me if I am the sweetheart of an honest man? I do not account to any one but myself; I do not recognise any other rule than that of my conscience; I do not study the conventionalities. Is the society of to-day capable of creating a moral law? My logic and my reason are the guides that I will follow; in whom can I have more confidence than in myself? As for the people I may shock, I do not recognise their authority to dictate to me what I should do."

"But, but, my dear child," interrupted Artout, "if all thought as you do we would have a strange state of

society. Each one would think only of self: this one would have one lover, that one two or three, according to their conscience—no universally recognised principle, but an individual morality; this one very narrow and that one very broad; and, moreover, all very respectable, noble beings to make the rules of life. *Diable!* our morals and our civilisation would descend dangerously near to that of our good friends, the *toutous*. Listen, I am perhaps an old *poncif*, but I am always on guard against myself, my exaggeration. Certainly I am broad; but I never turn up my nose at common sense, at recognised traditions. I am always correcting my personal opinions—to err is human—by the general opinions of my race and my time. Now, the one organisation necessary to our hereditary instincts, our temperament, and the public order is marriage. I have never ceased to preach that gospel of social ideals, and why do I, an old bachelor, permit myself to speak? Oh! that is very simple to explain; I have always wished to marry, but until thirty-five I worked like a madman; at that age I was established. I searched for a companion. I was offered marriage on marriage; but I was hard to suit. I wished always a woman more beautiful than the one selected for me. I dreamed of a great love; I waited for the one woman that would fill my life. You will understand when I tell you that the flower of romance still blooms in my heart, despite my terrible realisations of the pain of humanity, my thousand-and-one dissections. I scorned the marriage for money, I rejected the marriage of convenience. I waited for my ideal companion, and I have grown old and stupid in the waiting, and, not finding what I sought, have been the prey of my patients—my profession has absorbed me, body and soul. And now I have only regrets; it would have been better to have made a common-place marriage than live this

solitary life. I would be a grandfather now, and know all the happiness of family life."

Artout's voice trembled with the emotion of his great yet simple heart, then, with a shrug of his massive shoulders, he continued:

"It consoles me to bring the children of others into the world; that gives me an immense paternity. They are *all* my children in science."

He sat erect and extended his great arms, making a majestic gesture with those celebrated hands, as though they would cover an entire generation.

But his pupil of the old days, who had been dubbed "Morphine," remained thoughtful during that touching speech. She persisted in returning to her subject, as she asked in soft tones:

"What moral difference do you see between marriage and the liaison?"

"The liaison is of the private order, always secret like an infamy. The marriage is announced publicly, proudly. It is a union known to all and ratified by society!"

"That ratification does not make it moral."

"The liaison is ephemeral, the marriage is lasting."

"And the divorce, what do you make of that?"

"The divorce, the divorce, mon Dieu! that is but an exception."

"But, my dear master, all the world divorces now—many of them more than once, and why? When a woman meets in society three men to whom she has belonged at different times legally in marriage, according to the laws of that society, I ask myself what moral value has that legalisation; and I do not find that condition of freedom at all odious. . . . Listen, now is the time for me to avow that to me there is only one marriage, and that is the religious marriage, indissoluble, sacred, which *unites* husband

and wife by the mysterious, irrevocable sacrament of matrimony, while the legal act simply *binds* them together. I was at one time religious, I knew that conception, I admitted the inviolability of human alliances sealed by God, the mystery of united flesh, the sacrilege of divorce. Now that I have thrust aside those dogmas, rejected the divine law, must I accept this sham of human morals without resistance? No! no! the religious law is, at least, explained by God; I do not believe in anything but my conscience, and I am loyal to that conscience when I declare that I see nothing reprehensible in being the companion of the one man whom I have chosen, and I assure you, if I ever meet a man who will gain my love I shall not consider it a disgrace to belong to him independent of all conventions, as I do not wish to marry or be burdened with a family."

Artout laughed. He found that declaration very spicy, and admired the *bravoure* and sincerity of that young woman so fearless and yet timorous. He finished by telling her that if she refused to found a family and continued to defy the social laws, she would commit what he humorously called a "*péché laïc*."

The bell rang frequently during their talk. A crowd of patients were assembled in the waiting-room; the proximity of her clients gave the doctoress a sense of her value; she gathered more confidence and power as Artout cited for the last time the example of Thérèse Gueméné, now a mother, and blending her life of love with her social duties and her profession of doctor.

"And the baby," she cried, "what will become of him? Will she re-establish her practice of medicine? She must choose between her baby and her patients. I cannot understand a young mother who walks the streets from morning to night. It would be impossible to nurse the

child in that case. What do you suppose I would do if I had a child, dear master, with all I have on my hands? I have five consultations; I am treating in the town seven young women and three children; I can be called at any moment to the other end of Paris; to-morrow I assist you at an operation by giving the chloroform, in the rue Montaigne; I attend here in eight days three accouchements; I have a class for the study of bacteriology, most important. My laboratory takes three hours of my time each morning. I *déjeuner* to-morrow in the avenue Marigny, in the afternoon I attend a concert with a patient."

She could not resist a laugh of triumph that was, despite its arrogance, very womanly.

"You would be willing in the face of all this work to see me with children?"

He arose to give place to the patients awaiting her. As he held forth his hand he exclaimed:

"Good-bye, Phénomène!"

Then at the door he turned, and with a fatherly smile said impressively:

"I wish you a great love—one that will conquer you!"

When she was alone the doctoress stood motionless in the middle of the great white room, her eyes fixed in a soft expression as she murmured, "A great love—why not?"

And, thinking that one day, perhaps, Boussard would be there before her, saying to her alone those words that would reveal the mystery of his unknown soul, she was astonished to feel her heart thrill with a new, sweet emotion.

But presently she resumed her cold mask and, opening the door of the waiting-room, began to receive her patients.

IV

THÉRÈSE had taken her degree of doctor of medicine at the beginning of the year. She was bored with that long idleness, she burned to realise the dream of her life, to begin her career as a doctor. Her fine and robust constitution revolted against the many medical artifices necessary to child-bearing and obstinately refused to produce the maternal milk. Her health began to suffer, and Fernand was obliged to employ a wet-nurse. When he had brought the woman he watched her present that plebeian breast to his little one. Thérèse, looking on from her bed, saw him grow pale; she also was filled with a sense of mortification.

"What is the matter, my poor dear?" she murmured.

He did not hear her, but looked upon his little one in the arms of a strange woman with eyes so mournful and cold that she was silent, and sinking back upon the pillows felt a presentiment that she would be loved less now that she could not fulfil her maternal duty to their child.

For a long time this nurse was a thorn between them. To see her suckle the child was a positive pain to him. Thérèse always averted her eyes. Little by little they became accustomed to the habit and peace reigned; besides, the baby prospered. The father weighed him each day, proud of the plump body that grew daily larger, the rosy breast projecting firmly. Laughing with happiness, he seated the little naked form on the palm of his hand; a blessing seemed to radiate from the tiny being. Gueméné

beamed and expanded, he imagined that already he gave his son a great pleasure. Thérèse would fold the infant to her bosom in mute transports of tenderness. She would press long kisses upon him—kisses that lasted for many minutes. There was something of pity in her love; she thought him so small, so feeble, so powerless; she imagined the sufferings he would endure and the joy it would be to soothe him. When she left her bed for the first time she carried him to her cabinet. There she would promenade unceasingly, holding the tiny form in her arms, cooing a little song that the precious mite should not be fearsome or lonely. To gaze on those eyes, new to the world and life, filled her with a deep sense of the mystery of that young soul; and when that unfathomable glance met hers she became breathless in her desire to divine the untranslatable meaning of that baby smile. When Fernand returned from his round of calls for dinner, and during the whole evening, the talk was of nothing but baby. "When baby would be grown-up," was the unending theme.

Thérèse always longed for the year-old time, when baby would be able to speak a few words; but Gueméné already revelled in those vague glimmerings of intelligence. He did not wish to hasten them, he was content to await the slow awakening of that baby mind to an interest in the life around him, while he watched with passionate satisfaction the development of his child, loving him more in the present than he would even in the future.

. . . . .

In the month of August Thérèse was fully restored to her normal health. The Gueménés retook the road to Morgat, where they had left many delicious souvenirs of the previous year. Fernand relived all the phases of his romance. Two years had already rolled by since their betrothal, and at the end of that time their love was still

triumphant. The beauty of his wife still held him in thrall; he still thirsted for her caresses; certainly his love had passed through one crisis, when Thérèse had so stubbornly refused to nurse her baby. He had not acknowledged it to her, had striven to hide it from himself, the great melancholy that invaded his heart, the sadness that froze the warmth of his love for the moment, and then vanished in the bloom of a new and greater happiness. His passion had returned more vigorous, more profoundly rooted in his heart than ever. He thought no more of that maternal function so strangely thwarted, of his useless efforts to carry out his principles of lactation by the mother, almost a gospel of his race, disregarded in his own home. Thérèse was first; he acknowledged voluntarily her superiority. He knew well that he would submit to the worst of her tempers and yet love her. Besides, he was happy when he saw her rock the cradle of their child, their own flesh and blood; he felt that mysterious communion of the flesh made them one. It was the fulfilment of all their needs, the contentment of all their desires, and the bond of peace between them. Many times, when they were alone beside the sea, he had dismissed the nurse; all three would rest on the sands: Thérèse, with the baby on her knees, while Gueméné silently contemplated his wife, his whole being thrilled with the sense of proprietorship and absolute content. She would break the spell of his blissful infatuation by a word.

"On my return to Paris I must see Boussard"; or again, "I shall write to-morrow to order a table of gynæcology to put in my cabinet."

. . . . .

The return to Paris witnessed the close of that period of provisional peace. They had been back about one week when a young woman, sent by Artout, came to

consult Madame Gueméné. She was suffering from an internal malady. Although five years older than the doctoress, the mother of three children, rich, elegant, cultivated, she stood before Thérèse, confident, submissive, and reverent. The examination was a severe ordeal to Thérèse; she trembled and lost command of herself; doubts and scruples overcame her judgment; she lost confidence in herself, her skill, until in despair she was on the point of sending the patient back to Artout; then, with a powerful effort she regained herself and continued the examination with success, and when it was over blessed the unfortunate patient that had brought her this opportunity.

"Well, doctor?" said the patient anxiously.

A species of intoxication seized Thérèse. That title of "doctor," given her for the first time, caused her to feel a sensation of vertigo. She had achieved the prestige for which she had studied, laboured, and dreamed for ten years: the power to say the words that would revive hope in the sufferer, the life-giving words that would relieve distress, the authority of science before which the proudest head inclined.

Those first words of her *début* as a doctor were a verdict that appeased and tranquillised the young woman. It was an excellent beginning. She was good; it was sweet to dissipate all the anxiety of her first patient, to be able to say, "It is nothing serious."

She would now begin the treatment; as she wrote the prescription she felt that she was now the equal of Artout and Boussard. It was arranged that the new patient should keep her bed for eight days, during which she would make daily visits.

In this way she opened her brilliant career as doctoress. Two days later a woman living in the neighbourhood brought her sick baby. She was called to several houses

of the quay d'Anjou. Boussard, who was overworked, commenced to pass some of his cases of accouchements on to her. At the end of six weeks her first patient, now perfectly well, came in the company of her husband to return thanks for her services ; the two young people were overjoyed. They asked her to treat their three children. Thérèse enjoyed their enthusiasm and admiration for her science.

She selected the Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays of each week as her days of consultation. When the hours of consultation approached she was seized with anxiety, fearing that no one would come. Her husband's crowd of patients moved her to envy. When the patients arrived, the servant put the question :

" The doctor or the doctoress ? "

Sometimes the female patients calling on Gueméné would suddenly change their mind and pass into the cabinet on the left instead of that on the right.

Thérèse beamed and then thought : " One fatigue less for my poor Fernand ! "

But she was secretly delighted at taking a case from her husband ; besides, all quickly felt for her a certain fascination. The ladies of society found it *à la mode* to employ a woman-doctor. Thus she was for a long time an exceptional personage, an object of curiosity. Her reputation grew rapidly ; Madame Gueméné became very popular on the left side of the river. She had patients in the rue de Varennes, the rue de Bourgogne ; she was a living anachronism, this young modern Princess of Science, who had the freedom of those old hotels of the faubourg, and could traverse the courts of honour of those pompous old mansions of the historic Ile de St.-Louis ; penetrate into those high chambers with their lofty pier-glasses, where in the days of yore had lived, loved, and died many great ladies,

princesses, illiterate and indolent, her bygone elder sisters. These latter-day aristocrats overwhelmed her with tokens of respect and admiration. They evinced an extraordinary sympathy for her, pressing on her invitations of all sorts, which she evaded by that irresistible excuse :

" And my baby ; would you have me neglect him ? "

He was now five months old, with magnificent eyes like those of Thérèse. He knew his mother well, notwithstanding he saw so little of her, and would greet her with vigorous motions of the tiny hands, already firm and beautifully shaped. But he seemed to prefer Fernand, to whom he gave signs of excessive joy at the sight of his beard. Madame Herlinge availed herself of the privilege of a grandmother and declared he was too wise for his age, which was true, as he already displayed an excellent character, full of life and gaiety. Any bright object, however small, caught his attention, and threw him into ecstasies of delight as vigorous as they were expressive.

Sometimes Gueméné was almost overcome with happiness over this beautiful baby, but presently his joy would be turned into a martyrdom. Thérèse would leave the house for her professional duties, and he, also, would be obliged to go, while the child was left to the care of the nurse. During those absences the poor father was tortured by misgivings. He had an added source of worry. The first months the baby had slept in their chamber, but the sound of the telephone, which frequently rung up Thérèse for a sick-call, disturbed the little one, and he was put to sleep with the nurse. This gave Fernand much secret annoyance. The young doctoress grew more and more passionately absorbed in her medical work ; it became the exclusive employment of her life. Fernand gradually realised his former fears ; he reproached her silently, but he would have suffered more had not an unexpected opportunity of

advancing in his profession arrived to prove a counter-irritant.

His temperament was modest and a little taciturn; therefore he pursued in secret those studies in experimental therapeutics at the laboratory of the École de Médecine. No one of the school knew that he was seeking the serum of cancer. For many months he patiently cultivated in the bouillon composed of the breast of the cow those mysterious micrococci that his scientific genius had for a long time foreseen. Then he experimented on the inoculation of cancer and tumours of various types on the guinea-pig, rabbits, and white mice. At the same time he pursued a course of palliative treatment with the unfortunate Jourdeaux, fighting the cachexia, desperately bent upon preserving his life until the day when the triumph of his therapeutic discovery was assured. The day had come. By extenuating the virulence of toxins through proportions slowly drawn with chemical salts he had made a serum. Of the seven rabbits inoculated four had developed cancer. With three of those the injection of the serum had determined the reabsorption of the cancerous mass; the fourth rabbit had perished. From the thirteen cancerous guinea-pigs he had obtained three complete cicatrisations.

It was then that he began on Jourdeaux the new treatment of the application of the serum. One evening he returned home triumphant. He had been detained late with Jourdeaux in the boulevard St.-Martin, where he went every day. On his arrival he seized Thérèse by the shoulders.

"Do you know I have cured Jourdeaux?"

The young wife looked at him for a moment and smiled.

"My poor dear, what is this joke!"

"I do not joke. I have discovered the antinoplastic serum."

She grew pale, when speaking of the greatness of that declaration hurled at her so brutally. In the sceptical tones of the doctor, she warned him against being too sure of his victories. Then Gueméné, with the cold air of a man sure of himself, enumerated the changes that had taken place in the condition of his patient during the three weeks of serotherapeutic treatment. The cachexia had apparently disappeared, there had been an increase of weight, and the improved digestion had diminished the liver pains, all of which proved that the progress of the cancer had been arrested. The young woman knew too well the character of her husband to doubt his sincerity.

"But," she said, in a hurt tone, "you have never spoken to me of your work."

"We have so little time to talk now," replied her husband, glad of the chance to relieve his injured feelings. "You are so occupied with your personal cares. . . . Then, I was not sure of success; the hope of luck gave my studies their only importance, a failure would have rendered me ridiculous. As for me, I did not know their real value. You would have criticised me severely. You cannot be one of those innocent little women who go into ecstasies over the least idea of their husband. . . . You have, beside, your life outside of mine; I could not burden you with my discouragements, my obsessions, my dreams, all those things that have worried me for five months, without telling you my secret."

She began to weep.

"They can truly say now that I am not loved. What have I done to merit your reproaches? You have concealed your work from me. Why do you misjudge me?"

He left her without answering, and went to his little son. The fathers know that their children will one day judge them. Gueméné already thought of the time when his son would be a man and admire his father. He embraced the

little one dotingly. It would be his joy to prepare him for the life that was before him ; henceforth the progress of that child would be amid an atmosphere of greatness, a way leading to glory.

Thérèse experienced some odd sensations over the scientific discovery of her husband. He made a statement on the case of Jourdeaux and was warmly praised. Artout, Boussard, and Herlinge, the three greatest surgeons of the medical world, hotly discussed the discovery. The subject created a sensation in all the medical academies of Europe. It was not proclaimed a success, as yet, owing to the lack of many conclusive examples of its cure, but it brought the full light of celebrity the modest young doctor of the Ile St.-Louis. Thérèse was sad and crushed. Her career seemed very insignificant now ; she thought of the renown that would have been hers also, if the baby had not come to interrupt the studies that had begun so brilliantly. She was reduced now to one humble contribution on her researches of "*The state of the heart in infectious diseases*," a commonplace subject that many others had attacked. The sudden fame of Fernand filled her with a curious sense of her inferiority. In what did she differ from Madame Adeline, she asked herself, only in the fact that she had a richer class of patients, whom she treated in the character of a *sage-femme*, holding the ordinary diploma for intelligent skill. Often she thought of the laboratory of Madame Lancelevée.

When she interrogated her husband on the subject of the Jourdeaux case, he became loquacious. That household, where he passed at least a few moments each day, had become very familiar to him ; it was impossible to find words worthy of painting that picture of wifely devotion displayed by Madame Jourdeaux. She was incomparable ! She had been a powerful aid to him in the cure of her husband. It

was she who sustained him in those long and arduous experiments. One day he was so weary and discouraged that he wished to abandon the case altogether. She implored him not to give up the struggle, to continue his researches.

"You had told her, then, of your work and kept her informed of your progress?" asked Thérèse.

He was obliged to do so. Detesting charlatanism, he felt it was not wise to hide his methods, and when he beheld Madame Jourdeaux cloistered in her devotion to her poor sick one, renouncing all pleasure, all distractions, never going out, the immolation of that wife in her supreme struggle against death for the life of her husband, stimulated him to persevere; he had no desire for glory, no scientific interest. It was truly for the sake of Jourdeaux alone that he had fully accomplished the immense labour of that discovery.

. . . . .

In January the baby was taken suddenly ill. The nurse declared it was only an attack of teething.

The poor little one never ceased his feeble cries; the sound was so pitiful that one hearing it would wish to fly from that heart-breaking sound. The distracted parents passed every night until dawn, bending over him, their faces pale with anxiety, as they exchanged in low tones the technical words that named every known infantile disease. The servants were constantly running to the chemist. One suggested an emetic, another baths, the nurse declared:

"Oh! he has not taken the breast for four or five days."

"Miserable woman!" cried Thérèse, "you acknowledge your neglect to tell me!"

"How could I upset you, Madame, for such a little

thing ? I did not dare, especially as I knew that Madame had not much time to give him ! "

He was rigid, stretched out on the knees of his mother, who sustained the little head in the palm of her hand. His eyelids were wide open, showing the eyes rolling slowly like moving globes as he moaned continually. Thérèse, distracted, disfigured by weeping, gazed upon the little sufferer, while Gueméné stood beside her helpless, the tears coursing down his cheeks, and dropping on his beard. At five o'clock in the morning he murmured brokenly :

" I know nothing more, I am not capable of thinking."

His wife turned to console him.

" Telephone to Madame Lancelevée ; she is a children's doctor."

An hour later the doctoress arrived without a sound, discreet, like a shadow. She removed her fur mantle and took the baby, that she had stripped of its robe, and examined the skin by the light of the lamp. The eyes of Thérèse were riveted on that masklike face, she hoped to read in those calm features a reassuring diagnosis. Perhaps the clairvoyant instinct of the mother was no longer capable of divining her child's danger in this crisis, but the doctoress called the nurse into an adjoining room to interrogate her. After a few minutes Gueméné followed them ; he found Madame Lancelevée auscultating the nurse :

" What have you discovered ? " he asked.

" Nothing ! " was the imperious reply.

They returned to the child, then Gueméné and his wife began a scientific discussion with her, but she cut them short; she had not come to talk, but to act. She decided to summon Boussard by telephone. Suddenly Thérèse succumbed to her grief in a paroxysm of weeping. She abandoned herself to despair, covering the baby with frantic kisses as she cried in heart-rending tones :

"My Nono, my Nono! he will die!"

The doctoress was touched to tears by that despairing cry of the mother.

"It is the nurse who has killed him; she has poisoned him. Tell me, she has poisoned him!"

"No!" declared Madame Lancelevée firmly; "you must not say that, madame!"

At seven o'clock Boussard arrived; he had not lost a moment in coming. He entered the room with that careless gait due to his great size, and, though seeing Madame Lancelevée there, went at once to Thérèse, dropped on his knee before her, and began to examine the baby on her lap, bending his head close to the little sufferer's body.

"I wish to have a few words with you privately," came in a whisper from Madame Lancelevée.

Gueméné prepared to follow them from the room, but she gently prevented him.

The daylight was creeping through the lace blinds of the room in which they stood together in that serious *tête-à-tête*. A moment of silence, strange and tragic, fell between them; they looked into each other's eyes, and were conscious of a mutual embarrassment; they were attracted to each other yet repelled as though the time had not yet come . . . they bore themselves as coldly, distantly, as though meeting in the amphitheatre of the Charity Hospital, at his clinic—where she went without any false prudishness to seek him, and where she occupied a seat in the first row, a courtesy granted her through the high regard in which her science was held—they met in frequent consultations at the bedside of the sick or dying—but it was always with the same attitude of aloofness, never a word that would give the lie to their assumed coldness; but each meeting, despite all this, strengthened their

reciprocal attraction, he, fascinated by her genius, she, dominated by the mystery of that heart she would conquer. Like two statues they stood now, in the silence of the room, rigid with that air of secret defiance.

"My dear master," she began, speaking with cold deliberation, "there is a very delicate point in this consultation upon which I wish to warn you. My confrère, Madame Gueméné, in order to give all her time to her profession, found it necessary to employ a wet nurse; I know, through indiscreet gossip, that her husband did not approve of this. . . . I find to-day that the nurse was no stranger to the illness of the baby. She has confessed it to me, she has acknowledged that the child fatigued her by his incessant nursing, and in order to appease the baby's too vigorous appetite she gave him milk, weakened with water, to drink. When I asked her if the milk had been boiled, she answered, 'Not always.' That explains much. On the other hand, she was, three years ago, wet nurse to a child in the provinces. That child died, when thirteen months old, of tuberculous meningitis."

"Ah!" said Boussard, with growing interest.

"I know," my dear master, "that you have noted these inexplicable cases of infection due to the milk of the woman. To be brief—the poor baby, you agree with me, cannot be cured: the unhappy parents have lost, for the moment, the power to diagnose the case of their child. They are, perhaps, ignorant of the truth. I believe it our humane duty to conceal it from them; when we think of the effect it would have upon them to know that the death of their child was due to the nurse, what will be the remorse of my young confrère, and what the reproaches of her unhappy husband. Will you spare them? They have suspicions of that woman."

"They will have no more suspicions, madame, and

I thank you for the precautions you have taken to warn me of this."

That ended the consultation. Still ceremonious and impenetrable, they returned to the side of the sick baby. The parents suffered in silence, the baby cried no more. Now and then a sob escaped Thérèse, but Gueméné remained motionless with folded arms. Dr. Boussard and Madame Lancelevée, in witnessing that scene of desolation in the once happy home of those loving parents, thought of the secret that united them, each conscious that the other knew the theories of the doctoress were triumphant. Before them was a woman who had sought to blend her maternal duties with her masculine profession. The poor baby was dying a victim to that presumption. Madame Lancelevée had said:

"She must choose between the child and her profession."

Now, she regarded Boussard with the calm gaze of the woman who already belonged in thought to him, for was there not here, before their eyes, a warning, a menace, in the sad picture of those despairing spouses, that justified the principle of love without contract, without family?

Presently, Herlinge the grandfather arrived, also Uncle Gueméné. Then came six celebrated doctors, seekers, thinkers, savants, who were in their turn powerless to assist the agony of the little one. It lasted just until evening, when, with a succession of feeble spasms the baby expired on the knee of his mother, softly, like a flame blown out. The grandmother carried away the little lifeless body to prepare it for the grave. Gueméné smothered his groans, Thérèse, distracted, extended to him her empty arms. He hesitated a second before throwing himself into them: they remained a long time interlaced in that mute embrace, without a kiss, or word, or a tear.

. . . . .

He made no reproaches, never alluded to the hireling who had nursed their child with such tragic results; there were no explanations exchanged, but a painful doubt hovered between them, both of that failure of the maternal function and the help nature had refused to their poor baby. These thoughts underlay all their words, their looks. Gueméné never ceased to say:

"If our poor Nono was living!"

He lived over the time when he still possessed his baby, when he had dreamed of the future, rejoiced in that nebulous soul of three, five months—imagining to-day his son at six, ten, fifteen, nineteen years. . . . Then he would weep as though he had in one blow lost sons of those ages. He declared now that it was for his child alone that he had had the least ambition; he refused to continue his work of research at the laboratory.

"Ah! if my poor Nono was still living!"

His rancour against Thérèse increased; but it was dignified and pitiful. In his secret meditations he continually reproached himself for not persisting in imploring her to nurse her baby. He remembered continually the day when he had presented the baby to her with a last effort to shake her resistance; he heard again her words as she repulsed the little one with a cruel gesture: "I beg of you, dear, do not insist." He found now how sinful an act that had been.

Gradually they avoided speaking of their sorrow. They no longer exchanged commiserations or wept together. Thérèse suffered atrociously from that exhibition of coldness; it proved to her that he would never be happy with her again, that he wished to detach himself from her completely. But when he returned home in the evening, tired, and weary of the day passed in pondering over his misery, and found awaiting him that beautiful wife, more beautiful

still in her sadness, more tender, more loving, his grief faded away and his passion for her revived as in the time of their first months of marriage.

Meanwhile the satisfactory state of Jourdeaux did not continue. Fernand resumed his attendance on the invalid, while the kind, sympathetic wife, understanding his grief, led him on to talk of his dead baby. Often she wept as she listened.

END OF BOOK III

BOOK IV

I

IT was a gloomy Paris, silent and deserted, that slept on the banks of the river that warm night in May. Gueméné was returning home on foot. He walked sadly along the length of the *quai aux Fleurs*. All the gaiety and life of the neighbourhood had flown towards the quarters devoted to pleasure. The Seine flowed silently in the network formed by the many banks of the two islands. The lights on the shores, the bridges, and the boats, were reflected in long fringes of fire that the undulations twisted into the shape of strange gigantic flowers. To the left the silhouette of the Hôtel de Ville was outlined in geometrical designs against the sombre velvet of the heavens. The innumerable illuminated windows of the great monument resembled the illustrations on the transparent ivory post cards representing the buildings of Germany by night. Before him the Ile St.-Louis arose midst the high breastworks of masonry cutting the water like the descent of a fortress, the dense foliage of the Italian poplars veiling the façades of the houses, appeared to be an obscure mass. immovable in the breezeless night.

Gueméné was thinking of the unfortunate Jourdeaux, whose relapse proved fatal. He could see him on his death-bed, wasted to skin and bone, panting, exhausted by that last struggle of bodily vitality against death. Then, the remembrance of his work, his deep researches, mounted to the brain of the young man. Of what use,

he thought frantically, were his studies, his hopes, all his boasts? He was so sure of curing the disease, he had expressed his belief before Boussard, before Thérèse, before the poor young wife herself, and, when summoned by her to that chamber of death, he found himself powerless, like other doctors, humiliated by the failure of his remedy, lowered in his own estimation—vanquished. . . . He tasted the full bitterness of defeat when the beautiful eyes of Madame Jourdeaux were raised to his in that gentle look of unutterable sorrow. He had failed, he had deceived himself, the antineoplastic serum did not exist; the treatment of cancer was abortive, like the methods of his predecessors. He attributed the cures accomplished in his laboratory to an error in his preliminary diagnosis. He had discovered nothing.

"Of what avail all that labour and fatigue!" he murmured in discouragement.

He recalled the long scenes in that laboratory of the École, his interminable work with the miscoscope, the inoculations, his observations, the evasions, the delays, the anxieties, then the presentiments of success, the violent shock of delight when he discovered that the animals absorbed the cancer virus, that slow approach of triumph the atmosphere of which he already breathed—just to the failure of all in the death of Jourdeaux. Paris herself, that he dreamed of conquering, had escaped him; the ghost of Paris seemed to hover round that deserted quarter, where his steps re-echoed, peaceful and silent as a corner of the distant provinces. Paris was behind there; her life flowed along the brilliant boulevards to the sonorous music of orchestras, the sparkle of woman's beauty, the palpitating, emotional world of the theatres, the congenial society of her salons, while a cloud of rosy light from her illuminations lingered in the sky above like a glorious mantle.

Gueméné followed humbly the road of the deserted quay. He was steeped in a feeling of infinite disgust. He felt himself useless, incapable. In his struggle with medical power to fight human suffering, an enemy in ambush had got the better of him. He had not known how to conquer it himself; it was victorious, invulnerable, still ready for its millions of victims.

"I will make no more attempts to conquer it," he said. The vision of Jourdeaux obsessed him, also that of his widow in tears: he judged himself a poor, unworthy man. The darkness of the quarter increased his sadness; he walked faster in the direction of the great black mass of trees before him; he wished to escape his terrors, to free himself of that horrible torture of failure goading brain and soul. Suddenly a light appeared behind the great clusters of foliage. It seemed to come from his house; the lighted windows of Thérèse's cabinet. A wave of peace swept over him. Thérèse! Had he not that sweet and tender companion to compensate him for all he had suffered?

He forgot all, hastened his steps, crossed the bridge of St.-Louis connecting the two islands. Already he could see their arms interlaced, that dear shoulder where he had so often placed his aching head, the sweet lips that exhorted him so tenderly. He thought of the last few months, and could remember no such sweet moments, no exchange of that tender, passionate intimacy that had made the past so delicious. He tried to analyse her. Did she still love him? It seemed to him that their love had grown weak since the death of the child. Under that ever-present feeling of love that enchained him to Thérèse where was the noble intellectual union that had bound them the first year? Vaguely he felt that he was at fault, but the crisis that he endured was his only excuse: he would confess all his wrongs.

When he reached the quai Bourbon the sight alone of their door made his heart beat faster with tender emotion: he hurried his steps, joyous as a young man hastening to a meeting with his *fiancée*. It was with a fever of impatience that he seized the knocker and let it resound on the door. It was with a gesture that defied resistance, as though the door would refuse to open, would rob him of the consolation of Thérèse, keep him from that love, that wifely compassion, of which he stood so much in need.

"Madame is upstairs?" he asked of Leon.

"No, Monsieur; Madame has been away since five o'clock; for an accouchement. Madame thought she would be detained long and left word that Monsieur should not wait for her."

Gueméné grew pale with suppressed anger and disappointment. He sat down alone to the cold repast remaining on the table. The old servant, Rose, had taken her departure some time ago, declaring that she could not remain in service where there were two masters. Since her departure there had been a succession of cooks, who proved very good or very bad. There was an occult conspiracy between them, respectively, and the other servants to exploit the household after their own fashion. Thérèse knew that they robbed her; and to keep up an appearance of surveillance, carried with her the key of any closet she chanced to pass; in this way her husband was, during her absence, often obliged to eat, one time, without linen on the table, another time without fruit, and still another, without wine or liqueurs.

Fernand endured all these little domestic contretemps with stoical patience, but this evening he was deeply annoyed. The servant informed him with an air of mischievous irony that there was no dessert, owing to the fact that Madame had locked the closet and taken the

key. He felt cruelly the discomfort of this slipshod fashion of conducting the household, to say nothing of the annoyance of being the laughing-stock of the servants. It seemed to him that the spirit of ridicule followed him and penetrated his home.

When he retired to his cabinet, it was to sit down to his table and work, all alone, like those sad bachelors who have no wife near to whom they can unbosom their hearts. Miserable and solitary, his state was more or less the same: he abandoned himself to the melancholy pleasure of nursing his grievances. There, where he had hoped to find consolation, in the arms of his wife, to avow all his discouragement, to call upon the tender energy of her love for support, he was prostrated by silence and grief; with his head between his hands he wept alone. Then he regretted his marriage with that proud, hard comrade, who had refused him the dénouement of his dreams. He recalled their baby, who might have been still alive, had she been faithful to her maternal duty and suckled their child, and that hunger of the paternal heart roused anew all his rancour. He prayed to die. . . . The time passed, and still Thérèse did not return. He desired her return that he might tell her how detestable she was. . . . A simple young girl would have made him happy. He recalled those he had known; but the charm and fascination of those memories of Thérèse's love rendered it impossible for him to be attracted by other women. He arose and sought in her cabinet for traces of her. He gazed on the chair by her desk, the table, her pen, her papers, the scientific aspect of the furniture, the special character of that room, which gave the idea of a powerful, intellectual being. He wished to destroy it, smash the desk, the microscope, burn the map of gynæcology, the papers and books, then throw the débris and cinders into

the river, destroy all that which had deprived him of his wife; then he would carry her off to a desert, despoil her of all prestige, her diploma, humiliate her, tame her, make her miserable and rule her as his possession, bind her to him by chains that could never be broken! Thus he waited for her, in a fever of anger, until three o'clock, when, just as the day was breaking, he dropped off to sleep in the easy-chair by her desk. At six o'clock the sound of the door opening aroused him. Thérèse stood before him, her face glowing under her veil from the freshness of the morning air, like a flower covered with dew, shivering a little under her cloth jacket; that return of his wife in the early morning hours, the care she had taken to prevent the sound of her boots, had a clandestine air, a suspicious appearance that recalled the romances of unfaithful wives.

"You have not gone to bed!" she exclaimed.

He looked at her coldly. She appeared to him like a stranger. He answered curtly:

"I waited for you."

She did not at once remark his singular attitude; she seemed to be a prey to some great agitation, in a state of glorious exhilaration, and with an extraordinary burst of loquacity she began to tell of a wonderfully successful accouchement that she had just made. It was in the *cité*, not ten minutes from their house. The doctor, a young man just beginning to practise, wished to sacrifice the child in order to save the life of the mother, when—God be thanked! the father thought of sending for the doctoress.

"And the child lives!" she cried victoriously. "A beautiful baby of nine pounds, and the mother is doing marvellously. I thought the husband would embrace me in his joy."

Proud of the gratitude and appreciation of those chance clients, excited by the fatigue and nervous strain of that night without sleep, she beamed with pride on her husband. He understood at once that it was not the moment whereon to avow the sad results of his work, while she exulted in her triumph. She was not the companion of all his moods, capable of modelling the state of her soul on the soul of her husband. She made him partake of her moods, joyous or troubled. The *moi* of Thérèse was too vigorous, unbending, unable to make those subtle renouncements common to the ordinary wife. She had her independent life, and would show herself happy or preoccupied, without asking for confidences. Gueméné gave a harsh laugh.

"Ah! yes! you save the children of others."

The eyes of his young wife lost suddenly their brightness. They darkened subtly.

"What is it you say?"

He looked at her cruelly: neither had the courage to explain that terrible allusion, but Thérèse grew pale under the blow of that brutal assertion. She had never before been subjected to such a taunt; her eyes were full of tears, but she resolutely held them back. Then Fernand, divining how deeply she was wounded, trembled, and cried in a voice heavy with profound sadness:

"Thérèse! Thérèse!"

She demanded in rigid tones:

"What do you wish?"

"Ah! I wish for you," he answered with a gesture of despair.

There was a moment of intense silence, during which their looks crossed, like two people who suspected each other. The misapprehension and doubt that reigned between them since the death of their child had come to

a crisis, as a smouldering fire bursts into a blaze. Thérèse trembled; she knew not why. Going to the window, she raised the blind and looked at the barges gliding silently along the river below. Fernand approached her.

"Have pity on our happiness," he said in low tones, "our happiness that is clouded; Thérèse, I feel that we are in danger. Our happiness was rare, beautiful, precious. Would you save it? Do you realise what it would be to lose it? Do you love me enough to be generous? I wish to conceal nothing from you, my poor love. My heart, against my will, is hardening towards you. Since the first moment of our loss I have suffered. The happier we were the more I have suffered, through you. To-day, those accumulated sorrows overwhelm me! I cannot continue this existence, it terrifies me, it will break the bonds between us. . . . Thérèse, one day I demanded a sacrifice to which you would not consent. We were not yet married; it was not so tragic as now, for we have now two years of married life behind us; there are between us ties that nothing can efface, we have loved, Thérèse. The failure of our love will be a terrible thing. Do you understand that which I would ask of you?"

"Yes," she answered, "I understand."

She gasped for breath, and in her agitation rolled the lace curtain of the window about her until it veiled her form, as she cried:

"Why not give me a blow on the head that would finish all? I will not sacrifice myself. Oh! I know the truth now: you are weary of loving me. My presence has become repugnant to you. What have I left if you deprive me of your love and my profession?"

"And if it is my will that you should give up your profession? Am I not the master?"

She panted out the words:

"Master! master!"

That unexpected declaration swept over her with the force of a terrible wave. She gasped, suffocated, by the reality of its meaning; she was maddened by that cruel glimpse of her real relation to the man she called her husband; every nerve in her body thrilled with the ardour of revolt. She faced him, like a lioness at bay, mute, yet brave in her silent defiance.

"Do not be angry," said Gueméné very gently. "When I said 'master' I have simply used my right. When two wills meet in conflict one or the other must bend. Nature has given to man the stronger will, therefore the husband should rule. You are an exceptional woman; for that reason I have subjected my will to yours. I have not fully realised it, but it has not forced me to command, on the contrary, I have considered it my duty. But to-day our love is in peril; I wish to preserve it, and I wish your submission. I wish you to guard our home from the ruin with which it is menaced. I have the right to command it; I am bound by my obligations as a husband."

"But is not that past?" she exclaimed. "Then, why watch for my return, attack me thus, like a bird of prey, to profit by my fatigue, my exhaustion, the better to vanquish me?"

"Thérèse!" he said, in a low voice, with an uneasy air as though ashamed of what he was about to confess, "we are no longer the same to each other——"

"Ah!" she cried, wringing her hands, "you love me no longer, my poor Fernand."

Sobs choked her. She sank on the sofa and hid her face. The sight of her grief moved him; he was touched by the sorrow that he had brought upon her. The wish to retract his words, to go on his knees and crave he

pardon, came to him; but the thought that those tears were but another evidence of her resistance to his will, restrained him, that she was obstinate, and if he yielded, she would, to-morrow, swerve from the duty she owed their home and make him suffer anew.

"Listen to me, Thérèse," he said, with passionate firmness, that sprang from his anger and love for her. "Listen, Jourdeaux is dead, the dream that sustained me has vanished. Certainly the death of one of my patients distresses me, and many times when I return here, my heart is heavy with the load of sorrow that the mother, widow, or the child of the deceased would thrust upon me, the reproaches that they hurl at me because I have not by some miracle restored the dead to life. Every doctor knows that sad hour when they wish to find at their fireside rest and consolation from those horrible scenes in the joys of home, the tender sympathy of a loving companion. It was in that spirit that I came to you last evening, burning for your presence, your serene gaiety, the sweet repose that I would find near your soul. But you were too much engaged with your professional duties, that had called you away. I did not complain, I tried to fight down my dejection, alone, the discouragement that would have lost its pain under the gentle ministrations of a fond wife. Last evening, Thérèse, I was crushed with disappointment. My work of a whole year had been in vain, my ambition destroyed like a bubble that bursts in the air, my discovery in ruins, covered with ridicule. I am a defeated man; nothing remains to me but you! Then I come here to seek my only refuge, my home! Instinctively I stretched out my arms to you, you, the only reason I have for living. I came to beg your caresses, your kisses; but I found you not. The night passed in waiting. Ah! why did you not hear

me? Where were you, so far from me, like a stranger? Could you not hear my whole being and soul calling for your love? Do you see now how often you have failed me when I had need of you, your tenderness, your care? too often have I realised that you did not exist for me, but only for your profession. Never have you given me those little cares, done those simple things for me that makes a wife like a mother to her husband. My home has been a sort of restaurant. I have never had, like your father, the love of a wife that considers him in all things, even to the dishes that are served to him at table. . . . A companion? But have you been one to me? What have we in common? When do we sit down together to enjoy our food? Is it not a chance when your patients permit us to take it together? Our evenings? You pass them shut up in your cabinet, surrounded by your books and papers, while I work alone, thinking of those homes where the lamp shines on both—the husband reading and the wife busy with her embroidery. Have we any talks, any promenades? Then when we seek our chamber for the night's repose, how many times the ring of the telephone comes to break the only joy I have left—the near presence of your sleeping form. . . . And I live this horrible life alone, deceived by a mirage that continually flies before me. We began our married life with different ideals. That I try to do, you undo. I brought to it a mad love, you, a parsimonious gift. You have reproached me with the birth of our poor little one. Have I not, then, suffered sufficiently for you, Thérèse, always for you? If you had wished, perhaps to-day our——"

He stopped short, through sheer inability to speak farther. When he recovered himself it was to murmur that unending phrase:

"If our poor little Nono still lived!"

"Oh! how cruel you are," said Thérèse in a hollow voice.

"I love you still," continued Gueméné. "I love you so much that I would carry you to the end of the world, and be content to dwell in a hut, to live on roots, if I could possess you entirely for my own. Truly, I love you as passionately as on the first day. I would cherish you as fondly, but at the bottom of my soul there is a reproach against you too violent to permit me to be silent. Ah! this is not the wife I would have chosen, this wife that I see so immovable, without a word, without a feeling of pity for all I endure, without a concession, implacable to the last, until my anger is as great as my love. I am no longer myself. I would break your will, crush you, kill you! I know not what I would do—I know not!"

She was terrified to see the state to which his suffering had brought him; all her love awoke before that picture of despair. She threw her arms around him and kissed him without thinking, without reason, as she murmured:

"Fernand! . . . how you misunderstand, how little you know me."

They embraced, trembling. All seemed an illusion save the power of the passion that reunited them. Meanwhile they clung together in that supreme embrace, lost in their emotion, before that prescience of danger, that fear of the ruin threatening them.

She continued:

"My love, you forget my tenderness, you misunderstand. Because it is not always expressed in little cajoleries, by silly trifles or foolish things, is it less strong, less great? . . . I love you reasonably, with all my intelligence, all my heart. My condition of a woman of intellect has developed the power of my soul. I have been made capable of a superior love. I say this without pride; few men are

loved more nobly, more absolutely than you! What matter if I have not the hands, like my poor mamma does at home, to make sauces, if I omit to watch the *pot-au-feu*? Those are for the people of our kind, little material details. Do you doubt the immense affection I have for you? It is a precious thing, it raises us to greater heights than other married people. They are content to rest below in the mire of common passion and vulgar ecstasies. Acknowledge that it is often better to use my energy in work that you do not approve, you—yourself—have too much love for it not to forgive it in another. My poor darling, trample on those old prejudices, learn to understand your wife anew."

He spoke chidingly:

"There are no new wives; they have the eternal love of men who revere them, for whom the least gesture of love is holy, for whom the tenderness and devotion is a religion which gives to every act the character of a sacrament. The plebeian woman considers the making of her husband's pot of soup an important duty to which she brings the reverence of a religious art, for is it not the foundation of his bodily well-being? There was the beautiful *tantine*, that admirable wife of my poor uncle, who searched every day for choice bits in the books—a sonnet, perhaps, that she might read to him in the evening. Men, dear Thérèse, need their wives, as children need their mothers. Your profession has made you unfaithful to me; it takes the sweetness, the enthusiasm, the intimacy that are my rights. I am as jealous of your profession as I would be of a lover. You accuse me of selfishness; but I have for your society, your care, your devotion the voracity of an animal. I am always hungry for you; I am like that because I love you. Give yourself entirely to me. I implore you; I wish it above all else. Give me *all* of you!"

She grew rigid in his embrace.

"You wish to kill me, Fernand," she murmured.

He continued:

"I wish it! Close your door to the people who come to consult you. Give up your patients, live at home that I may always find in you my companion, my confidante, my support, my joy—and not my martyrdom."

"But I cannot," she wept, "I cannot. What you demand of me is unreasonable. What could I do with my time, how support my idleness? Think of the terrible ennui that would devour me; my life has been so full of work, so happy."

He seized her arm with brutal force and cried fiercely:

"And if I begin to hate you?"

"Oh! Fernand."

She tried to free herself, but he caught her by the wrists; his eyes were like those of a madman as he cried passionately:

"Choose! choose!"

She was pale, her face drawn with terror as she pleaded:

"Let me go—let me go! I will promise; I must think it over. Give me fifteen days. I promise you I will try to do what you wish. I can do no more."

She had come to the end of her strength, and he was touched with a pang of pity. He helped her to her bedroom and assisted her to undress. He put her to bed without a word; when she fell asleep he still remained there at her bedside, silently watching her for a long time before he sought his pillow. When they met after that sad interview both wore an air of embarrassment, but no reference was made to the matter. Thérèse had fifteen days to meditate on her surrender. He granted her that delay without a sign of his misgivings. He took up the routine of his work, trying to find in it some measure of

peace. He showed a new interest in his patients, strove to feel towards them a kindly compassion; but a great weariness oppressed him, broke all his efforts.

"I can never recover from that terrible defeat," he thought despondently.

The days seemed interminable. He realised now how greatly he missed the poor Jourdeaux. He had contracted that habit of daily visits for eighteen months, and now that they were over the time hung heavily on his hands. When the hour came at which he had been accustomed to call, he had a vision of that gentle wife, robed in a loose cashmere gown, sitting by the bedside of her suffering husband.

His work in the laboratory of the École was at a standstill. He no longer went there; the paraffin was allowed to remain in the stove, the guinea-pigs were dead, the mysterious microbes slept in the bottles amid the yellow bouillon. Gueméné drove away every souvenir of his disappointed hopes. His reputation, nevertheless, grew. He had many applications for the treatment of cancer, but he refused, declaring that he was no longer certain of his methods. The young doctor inspired an extraordinary sympathy. The sufferers of that terrible disease of cancer came in throngs to supplicate his aid. To please them he employed injections of aqua-fortis, refusing payment for his services until the patients were cured. Strange to say, the treatment was successful in ameliorating the sufferings. Gueméné sighed:

"Such is Science!"

He kept a keen observation of his wife, striving to divine the state of her mind; but she was impossible to read. A black distrust blinded him. If she loved him enough, he thought, to make the sacrifice he demanded, would she not have done so the first day? A great coldness arose between

them; they avoided all *tête-à-têtes*. When he held his consultations at the same time that she was likewise engaged, he arose many times, and going to the door listened to the echoes of her voice in the neighbouring room. She seemed to speak with animation, brilliantly as usual, and full of energy in controlling her patients. She seemed to brighten in that congenial atmosphere. He was seized with a new and strange scruple; he feared to have overstepped his rights as a husband, to have more or less abused his power. Those scruples proved a counter-irritant, and effaced much that helped to resign him to the harshness of the step he meditated. He felt no further interest in medicine; the serotherapeutic researches appeared to him a mere loss of time. He thought of his baby, of the age he would then be had he lived, and sighed:

"Ah! if my poor Nono was here!"

One evening at five o'clock his steps turned mechanically in the direction of the boulevard St.-Martin, when the idea came to him to make a visit to the widow. As Madame Jourdeaux was not receiving, he was ushered into the chamber of her late husband, where she sat by the window busy with the work of embroidery, while her little boy played about on the carpet. Her beautiful features wore the imprint of sorrow, but were calmer since her sad duties as sick nurse had ceased. She smiled on Gueméné as the little André ran to his good friend, the doctor, and sprang into his arms. He pressed the boy to him in a convulsive movement; he could have wept as he kissed that pretty boy as warmly as though he were his own son.

"Poor baby," said the mother sadly.

Then she declared:

"It has been lonely without you, doctor. I have wished for you every day when the hour came for your visit as before."

Gueméné stole a look at the bed, where lately the dead husband had lain in agony. He saw for the first time the covering of silk and lace. Madame Jourdeaux divined his thoughts; her simple mind could not express the poignant experiences they held in common, she could only murmur:

"What sadness and pain there is in life!"

His fate seemed more sombre and hard in comparison with that of the serene and magnetic woman before him. She was alone, without support, a widow at eight-and-twenty; with the air of a recluse in the religious silence of that chamber, where she was continually embroidering as she sat in the window overlooking a great court. The love that she gave Jourdeaux was nothing more than pity and devotion; she had preserved the virginity of her soul, which imparted to her face an aspect of sweetness and innocence. She would have resembled a nun had not the maternal instinct betrayed her each instant by the passionate expression of her face whenever her glance fell upon her child.

She did not follow the example of his clients, who, when their sick succumbed, forgot all gratitude to the doctor, as she said impulsively:

"Never can I forget the care you took of my poor husband, doctor. I know how faithfully you worked to save him. It was due to the incurable character of his disease that you failed to save him. Oh, no! I shall never forget, if I live to be a hundred years old."

"But I did nothing," said Gueméné, who found it very sweet and consoling to confide his discouragement to this gentle young woman, to testify to all his futile efforts. But I have not saved your sufferer. I foolishly gave you hope. Ah! believe me, I was sure of the success I promised you. Another could have done as much or more."

"No, no; no other could have done better," she replied. "You must seek still for that remedy—to cure others, you will find it."

He declared that he had completely abandoned his work.

"How! that is not possible," she cried; "but you have not the right to do that; you possess the true genius of the *savant*. God has given you those great faculties for the good of suffering humanity. It is a noble duty for you to exercise them. I feel that you will be successful. I am sure of it. I see already the hundreds of miserable sufferers who await the coming of doctors like you, and whom you can render happy. You may be at the very door of Truth. Perhaps your failure to continue the search for the serum may act against further discoveries to cure that awful cancer. Oh! doctor, you must not stop on the road."

He let her speak, finding it very sweet to be confronted by fate in the person of that simple woman, ignorant of science, who did not even comprehend his work, who encouraged and advised him with all the warmth of her confidence in him. She did not convince him, but she soothed him. He beamed under that admiration, and this time without artless judgment or the right to feel the fervour of her confidence.

"You will not abandon us?" she finished. "Since the death of my unfortunate sufferer, I have been possessed by the idea of hereditary cancer. Tell me, could my little son inherit it?"

"But no!" said Gueméné, "certainly not; there is not the least danger."

"Oh! I know you would not alarm me at once, but I fear all the time. Could not something be done to preserve my poor little child against that horrible thing? Is there

no way of doing so? Oh! it seems to me that if I were a doctor I could find out. They can give vaccination. Why should it not be done for all these terrible diseases?"

She called the child:

"André!"

The little one left his play and began to fondle his mother, rubbing his little form against her knees. His face was pale, grave, and very sweet. He was very intelligent, very docile, and a little spoiled by those who loved him. Gueméné regarded him tenderly. It pleased him to hold the little soft hands in his, ofttimes without kissing them, they recalled the *other* who would have been that age one day.

"Can nothing be done?" begged the mother helplessly.

Gueméné was silent as he looked at the child, who asked:

"You will come again, won't you?"

"Yes, little one," answered Fernand; "I shall certainly come again."

Madame Jourdeaux saw the tears in his eyes. The charming woman, wise in her ignorance, understood that he was thinking of his dead baby. She drew the child to her, then, moved by a delicate sense of shyness, she spoke of her husband, as though she would hide under her widow's crape the light of her joy of motherhood.

Gueméné left that congenial home with a sense of renewed hope. It seemed that every obstacle before him would vanish, that henceforth every closed door would open to offer him a greater scope than ever. The vaccine of cancer! What an aim! What an object to work for! Would not that be worth a lifetime of work to attain? What matter if he worked for a future generation? . . . During that return journey his brain was excitedly working out a thousand combinations. He thought of the new salts of quinine to treat and modify his toxins. He was seized with a wish to go to his laboratory. He was beset

by a throng of ideas. Thérèse was at home when he entered the house. He found her in the linen-room on the third floor, attending to the arrangement of the freshly laundered napkins. She was pale and worn. Seeing her so occupied, he exclaimed thoughtlessly:

"Well, have you made no visits to-day?"

"No," she answered; "I am resting."

Her voice was hard, it held a tone of rebuke. He paid no heed to that subtle reproach but gazed with satisfaction on the *armoire* filled like a bookcase, with folios of linen, the demifolios of sheets, the octavos of pillow-slips, and the slender pamphlets of napkins. That snowy aspect of well-ordered household belongings arranged by the hands of his wife pleased him. He gave no word of his approval, but passed into his cabinet, and opened the drawer where the notes of his work of the laboratory had reposed for two months.

. . . . .

The following day, when he returned for *déjeuner*, he found Thérèse in her wrapper, busy scanning the greasy cook-book from the kitchen. He was astonished, anxious, but he understood when he heard her say to the servant:

"You are not to admit any one for me to-day: request the patients to see your master, as I am not well."

He trembled. Had he heard aright? Had she decided already? Was his wish about to be granted?

When they were alone he approached her, and, bending over her, said in a low voice:

"Explain; tell me! What is the meaning of this?" He was radiant with triumph and awaited her surrender in a burst of tenderness. But Thérèse controlled her impulse.

"Wait three days; ask me nothing now. Will you give me peace until then?"

As he turned away with an indescribable look of disappointment, she exclaimed:

"Ah! my poor darling, how you torture me." It was the cry of agony wrung from the proud lips of that Thérèse who forced herself to rend the bonds of her ambition, to shatter her dream of greatness with absolute loyalty and sincerity to herself as well as to her duty. The struggle had lasted two weeks. Her nights were not free from that obsession, for she saw in her dreams poor women on their beds of suffering, crying out for her, imploring her aid; but she was detained by a secret force; she could not go to them.

Fernand seemed to act with the utmost hardness in pressing her to make that great abdication. But she loved him so profoundly that the fear of losing his love urged her to make that renouncement. As the time approached her resolution weakened. Never before had her profession appeared so great, so beautiful, so absolutely necessary to her. A young girl that she had nursed through an attack of infectious scarlatina and brought to convalescence, when the family had given up all hope, gave Thérèse a taste of triumph, a faith in her skill, that intoxicated her. At the bedside of that young girl she felt like a queen whose wish even death must obey; for had she not conquered death by her authority, her power in saving that young life? She was covered with adulation, admired, glorified by the grateful girl and her people. She plunged into work, going over all the medical press, renewing her study of therapeutics in the new books just published by Boussard. Science was constantly widening to her view. Always curious, hungry to know more, she continued to frequent the hospitals, passing her mornings, now at the "Maternity" of Beaujon in the class of Artout, again at the Children's Hospital, and then with Boussard

at the Charity. She had exercised her profession with a passion as noble as it was intellectual. She led a life of unrestrained thought and research; she won the admiration of the most captious of her masters, and enjoyed their ready sympathy and aid in her work. One day Madame Herlinge asked her: "Do you not suffer when you lose a patient, as your father suffers?" She was proud to answer:

"But, Maman, I have *never* lost a patient."

That activity, that intellectual whirlwind gave her the deepest pleasure. The sad souvenirs of the death of her baby, the tears and regrets disappeared in the infatuation for her work. It was all this work, these wonderful experiences, this admiration, this fame that her husband wished to tear from her. He loved her less—he had avowed it; and that confession tried the young wife past endurance. But could she save their love from the menace that threatened it by sacrificing to him her art, with all the success, the happiness that she had derived from it? She sought to come to a conclusion by plunging into a retreat of three days, to consider that act in the calm of her retirement, the monotony of her household duties. It was thus, under the pretext of her health, that she decided to dismiss her patients during the three days that she was cloistered in her home.

At first she felt like one in prison. She forced herself to all sorts of work and inspection of the household, superintending a grand clearing-out, which infuriated the two servants. She had never cared for her house, and now she found it detestable, small, and tiresome. The furniture had nothing of that familiar character which is a source of quiet pleasure to women who pass the most of their time at home. She was so little there that she felt like a lodger in her own house; she took refuge in her bedroom; she

looked at the bed, the beautifully carved *bretonne* wardrobe —Gueméné's gift—the sofas, the carpet, slightly worn by their footsteps during the morning dressings and ablutions. She felt nothing of that mysterious solitude that some women find in their bedroom, the reflections sleeping in the mirror, the charming seclusion of the dainty muslin curtains, the repose, the immobility of every article awaiting the return of the occupants for the night: the poetry of that silent chamber did not move her, did not touch any tender chord in her heart. The only room that was really hers was the cabinet of her work. The second day she closed herself in there to seek strength and consolation. She entered it like a wandering soul that returns to life to revel in forbidden joys. It was mournful to see spread out before her the papers, the forbidden books. To see the table of gynæcology where she would, perhaps, never again employ her time in study: the microscope, the desk, the chair—all would soon be indeed useless. She grew faint; a long sigh of regret escaped her; she sank into the chair before the desk and, burying her face in her hands, burst into a paroxysm of weeping. "I can never give it all up. I cannot, I cannot," she thought in bitter dismay.

The following day, which was the decisive one, she was torn with grief over the cruel dilemma imposed on her by Fernand. It oppressed her more than ever; the idleness to which she would be condemned caused her anticipations of the most painful kind. She was possessed by a sense of mortal terror; she understood more and more the impossibility of the sacrifice demanded of her. She thought of Dina Skaroff, that little foreign friend so incomprehensible, who had accomplished with a tender smile the same act before which all the strength of her intellect and heart rebelled to-day.

Pautel had supplemented his clinic for heart diseases

in the rue St.-Severin by an office in the boulevard Arago, where he received patients. There he had installed himself in a poetic little home. Thérèse and Dina had not seen much of each other save at the Herlinge dinners. Each followed their separate lives, but that of Madame Pautel did not permit many visits.

Thérèse found the house perched in a niche at the back of a garden odorous with beds of carnations; it seemed to be a sort of quaint hermitage completely hidden in its leafy surroundings. The curtain of one of the windows was suddenly raised, and the smiling face of Dina appeared. In a moment she was on the steps, awaiting her visitor and smoothing out gaily her red wrapper.

"It is not necessary to change my dress to receive you —is it, dear?"

She was the same Dina, middle-class in bearing, grown slightly stouter, a tamed antelope; she giggled with easy satisfaction, and found the comfort of a peignoir and slippers preferable to any other dress. As she received her friend she cast a furtive glance over the little garden, where the baby's nurse was washing the linen of the little one. Thérèse was shown into the dining-room, with the excuse that the drawing-room was not yet "tidied." A savoury odour of bouillon came from the adjoining kitchen. Papers and books littered the table of the dining-room. The room was spacious, and hung with pretty tapestries of modern pattern. The furniture was rich and comfortable, the floor highly polished, the pipes of the doctor adorned the chimney-piece, a pile of journals disfigured the side-board, and a folding easy-chair was open, evidently awaiting its master. A Chinese plant heavy with mauve clusters garlanded the open window.

"You remember the time at the Hôtel-Dieu?" cried Dina gaily. "What a long time ago it seems, does it not?"

Thérèse sat down, and with half-closed eyes thoughtfully studied the curious metamorphosis of her little Russian friend.

"Yes; I see you again in the hospital ward," said Thérèse, "in your blouse, stethoscope in hand, talking of the extra heart-beats or of the insufficiency of coppers! My little Dina, you are indeed changed!"

"God be thanked! It was not funny then; those were hard times, believe me."

Thérèse asked:

"Then, you do not regret anything? You do not miss your work? . . . You have no void in your life?"

"How, dear? Once a void existed in my life; now all is complete. I am happy, perfectly satisfied, and not idle at all, I assure you. Look! Since this morning I have not had time to change my dress."

"Yes," said Thérèse; "but what a difference between your occupations now and your former work. It seems to me that your life must have lost part of its charm and interest."

"And my husband?" cried the young woman, "my child? Have I not something more to live for now, more interest than in my former life? Certainly, I cut my profession with pleasure. It had amused me to the end, and it gave me all I have. It was the healing part of it that appeared the most beautiful: to cure the poor old people and give them a new lease of life; to heal the children, make them strong and happy, and also to decipher the diseases as one would a rebus; to find the secret of physiology and the human chemistry; to conquer the abominable enemies of our race, the infinite little things that ruin us; the study to know how to fight those wicked things and be one of the humble workers in the great medical field." But she loved her husband, she consecrated herself to his

happiness, made him a home and a family. Was not that the best? Her profession was the means, but not the reason for living. It was sufficient when she was a young girl with nothing better to do; but, after all, sentiment is stronger. . . . "Ah, my dear, many times I would not have been astonished if you yourself had thrown your diploma of medicine into the fire."

"I do not believe I could ever do that," said Thérèse, uneasily. "I would be afraid of growing weary of a life of dullness!"

"Dullness!" cried Dina with a laugh. To convince Thérèse she related all the duties that filled her days. The care of her little one occupied the greater part of her mornings. It was necessary to have some knowledge of medicine that could be applied more or less in the way of hygiene in bringing up her children. There were the baths, the douches, the massage, and the elementary gymnastics. She wished her Sonia to be healthy as well as beautiful. Then she assisted in the cooking, helped the servants in their work and rubbed up the furniture if it needed polishing. "My husband loves to see the floor waxed until it shines like a mirror," she said vainly. He adored Russian cooking; when fatigued nothing restored him and excited his appetite like a dish she had made herself. Ah! how the time flew when he was away at the office. What a complicated life it would be if she assisted the doctor at his clinic in the rue St.-Severin. Oh! certainly, she did not play a great rôle, but Pautel could make use of her knowledge, she could make some prescriptions and massages, and she enjoyed that little plunge into her former atmosphere. Then, she made the visits that the doctor judged necessary: calls upon the wives of his great confrères, and those of the fashionable folk. For this her husband wished her to dress very well; and as they were economical she

bought her hats here and there, went to four or five modistes before selecting her gown, and, notwithstanding all that, she must be at home by six o'clock each evening as Pautel wished to see her at the door to greet him on his return. Then she no longer had any time for herself: they laughed and talked together, and after the repast made up the accounts. Sometimes the poor man was so fatigued that he rested in a big easy-chair, while she read aloud from the medical journals. That tender young wife believed in all she said, and could speak of nothing else save that life to which she was passionately devoted; she bloomed in its shade, developed into happiness, like one of those fragile plants that can flourish only under the protecting shelter of a vigorous tree.

It was a strange thing, but that sort of happiness did not tempt Thérèse. She exaggerated the vulgarity of such a life, could not comprehend its sweetness and tranquil harmony. The beautiful abnegation made by that charming Dina, at once so spiritual and wise, revolted her.

"It is the loss of all intellectual dignity, a real suicide," she thought.

She left her friend with a shiver of nervousness; she appeared cold, but she had suppressed her own share in the talk for obvious reasons. She did not speak of her successful career through the same feeling of delicacy that actuates one rich in the world's goods to refrain from boasting of their wealth before another less fortunate. She did not see the eyes of Dina following her with the sad gaze of one who reads the secret misery in the heart of another. During the walk along the boulevard Arago, Thérèse thought of that friend watching her from the steps of her little home embowered in the blossoming Chinese plant, and murmured:

"Poor Dina!"

While Dina as she entered her house to seek her sleeping child, tasted anew the real happiness that encompassed her, and thought aloud:

"Poor Thérèse."

That evening, when Gueméné returned, his wife did not know how to tell him of her determination. The visit of the afternoon had shown her clearly and definitely how to act. Could she vulgarise her life into a commonplace existence like that of Dina? She refused to descend to that plane of middle-class routine. She was lucid now; she understood now to what an extent her profession had fastened itself on her life, the hold it had taken on the very fibres of her heart, and all that her personality would suffer by the forfeiture of her science if she ceased to be a doctor. The silence of Fernand seemed to cry aloud that unspoken question; the thought of the pain she was about to give him tortured her. How could she make him suffer, how supplicate him! When they were alone after the repast she fell into his arms, broken, crushed by her struggle.

"My dear love," she murmured, with passionate grief, "forgive me, I implore you."

"Forgive you?"

"The act which you demand of me requires the utmost heroism, Fernand. I assure you that I have tried to make that renouncement; I am not capable of it. Ah! I love you very much. . . ."

"My poor Thérèse!" replied Gueméné with great gentleness, "I never intended to make you suffer a martyrdom. I did, perhaps, go too far the other day, with my demands; I was too pressing. Only try, I pray you, to give less of yourself to your profession and more to your husband. Will you?"

The concession expressed in those affectionate words overwhelmed Thérèse. Above all, he did not hate her for

her resistance, but he had at last understood, perhaps, approved of it. She had no words to express her thanks. He felt her tremble with joy as she lay on his breast. She swore to cherish him more than anything in the world, to see nothing more than a pastime in her work, to take care of their home, to dismiss her patients and devote all her evenings to him; above all, she found again that double thirst for tenderness and glory, without sacrifice, without rancour. She was totally happy. But as she was making the most reasonable and reassuring promises for the future, he disengaged himself little by little from her embrace.

"Where are you going?" she said uneasily. "Do we not pass the evening together?"

She had imagined they would have just such another evening as that of their wedding-night: the long reverie at the window, watching the flow of the river through trembling foliage of the trees beneath them . . . but with a last kiss Gueméné disengaged himself and said:

"I go to call on Madame Jourdeaux. She told me this afternoon that her little son was not well."

II

LITTLE André Jourdeaux had contracted a slow, insidious fever that occasioned much anxiety owing to the tender age of the child ; they feared it would result in a case of meningitis. Gueméné called morning and evening, and when the danger had passed he still continued his visits. Madame Jourdeaux found her only distraction in those visits. She passed the long afternoons in her chamber engaged in the interminable embroidery work, seated by the window overlooking the enclosed courtyard, while the little boy in his mother's big bed whiled away the time in the amusing work of cutting out figures from the papers. At five o'clock the doctor arrived. André flushed with pleasure, while the pale face of his mother beamed in a charming smile. They stood at the bedside discussing the progress of the child, his temperature and nourishment. Gueméné's chair was drawn near to the easy-chair of Madame Jourdeaux, always busy at her embroidery. It grew to be his accustomed place and was invariably there, as though awaiting him. It was the month of July, and the heat excessive. Gueméné would sit down heavily and lean back as though worn out.

" You look very tired," she said one day as she regarded him with a look of tender pity.

" I am much fatigued," answered Fernand.

Presently she left the room, and when she returned she was followed by the *femme-de-chambre*, who carried a tray

bearing a collation of cold bouillon, wine, and biscuits. She offered the refreshment timidly. He accepted with alacrity, observing that he was very hungry, as he had lunched badly, owing to the absence of his wife. She watched him partake of her hospitality with an expression of satisfaction in her beautiful eyes; then she said in a low voice, as though touching on a delicate subject:

"Madame Gueméné is much occupied, is she not?"

"Yes, very busy!"

They said nothing more. He felt pained as much through his own sadness as through the subtle kindness of the woman who divined his misery. She turned away her eyes as she observed his mute complaining. She imagined how much he missed the care, the attentions, and proof of tenderness denied him by that doctoress who did not love him. The remembrance of the care he had bestowed on Jourdeaux and her little André returned to her. That knowledge awoke in her the desire to see him happy, full of the joys of life, adored. The time passed in that comfortable atmosphere; Gueméné lingered, indifferent and unwilling to break that spell of repose. The little boy played quietly among his pillows. The rays of the setting sun struck the windows with brilliant, fugitive beams. Various sounds announced the approaching dinner-hour. The occupants of the neighbouring apartments could be heard entering—the opening and closing of doors. The kitchens overlooking the courtyard sent forth savoury odours. The chamber of Madame Jourdeaux was decorated in tints of orange that gave soft, warm reflections most soothing to the eyes. A gold Empire clock re-echoed the tick-tack of the mechanical insect of sound within, while the blue vases were garnished with odorous tiger-lilies. A voluptuous peace reigned in the room. The following day when Gueméné came at his accustomed hour he found the tray of refreshments beside the big chair it

was his habit to sit in. He smiled, and excused himself, declaring that he did not wish to impose upon her kindness; but he sat down, nevertheless, and tasted the savoury dainties. A sudden sense of comfort moved him; he enjoyed the little meal with that good appetite of the healthy young man, while the sympathetic woman at his side watched him in unrestrained approval.

That little collation was now prepared each day for the doctor, and became a most important duty in the unoccupied time of Madame Jourdeaux. The selection of the wines, the cakes, the matter of replacing tea by chocolate, the addition of creams, ices, jellies, or sweetmeats afforded her the most pleasing distraction. All this developed her devotion to the care of another, so long experienced in the case of her suffering husband and which slept without an object since his death until the neglected Gueméné appealed to arouse it. She was filled with a gay little sense of importance that sent her out during the morning on a round of visits to the grocer and fruiterer in search of delicacies and expensive fruits. Sometimes she made pastries from the recipes she found in the fashion journals. The last thing she thought of in the night was "What shall I give the doctor for his collation to-morrow?"

He had no suspicions, scarcely a thought of those attentions, those smiles, and the mutual dreams that formed a pleasing accompaniment to the visits that the care of the sick boy entailed. This charming woman appeared to play the part of the good fairy to him in creating round him an atmosphere of kindness. He was so little accustomed to humouring, to foolish indulgences, that he enjoyed those collations with the appetite of a gourmand, not thinking of what a revelation his hearty appetite gave her of his wife's neglect, but seeking for words sufficiently warm to compliment Madame Jourdeaux. She awaited those words

of flattery and was filled with a new, strange pleasure in beholding his satisfaction. At the end of ten days, little André was completely well, and able to leave his bed.

"It will not be necessary for me to call again; the boy is all right now."

"But," asked Madame anxiously, "where will you go for refreshment after this?"

He could not prevent a smile over that innocent solicitude which caused him a secret pleasure as he pressed the warm, soft hand of the widow.

"You are an exquisite friend," he said. "You have taken good care of me these last few days; you have recalled my childhood, my home, the sweetness of my mother, my long vacations. But, now it is over; I must be brave, forget the nice cakes, the comfits of fruit, all the delicious things you have offered me, and go about my work." He laughed, but she remained sad.

"Ah!" she began. "I would wish——"

She did not finish as she looked at him with compassion. She thought how unhappy he was that Thérèse would not pet him as she had done—did not give him the attention due him . . . she said simply:

"You will come to see us sometimes?"

The child ran to him, saying:

"Yes, yes, you will come again; won't you?"

Then Gueméné hesitated; his heart swelled at the least words of the child, who seemed to remind him of that lost little one. Had he lived to the age of this boy, he likewise would have been good and intelligent. He raised the boy in his arms and pressed him passionately to his breast. Then he placed him on his little feet brusquely, and went away with swimming eyes that stung with the tears he could not control.

Madame Jourdeaux went back to her embroidery by the

window, thinking sadly how long the days would be after those pleasant visits. She sought distraction each afternoon in a promenade of two hours to give her son the air, but the evenings were very lonely and insipid. She would have liked to work for the doctor, make with her own hands something that would be useful to him; but what could she do? She did not know his house in the Ile St.-Louis. She forgot that she could not be useful there.

. . . . .

Thérèse no longer pursued her studies with Boussard at the Charity, neither with Artout at Beaujon. She made all her visits in the mornings and remained at home after her consultations. This seemed an enormous sacrifice to her, and she made her husband feel this more than once. But as she was called to cases of accouchement at all hours, she continued, notwithstanding her goodwill, to be absent all morning, the evening, and sometimes the night. He was no longer happy, while she thought bitterly of the lost studies.

"What good is it to deprive me of all my professional duties?" she said harshly.

"I do not know why you deprive yourself of them," replied Fernand. "I scarcely have you to myself a moment."

It was true, she had failed to limit the number of her patients, who, on their part, would not permit it. Nothing gave her more pleasure than to supplant one of her medical confrères. Then she was triumphant. Her charm, her beauty, and her wonderful skill and application seduced the patients. Called to treat the baby, and then the mother, she finally captured the father himself; the whole family surrendered to her and would see no more of the unlucky masculine doctor. It was in the rue Grenelle that she made her next conquest in the big brother of her young

patient, and brought him safely through an attack of scarlatina. In the boulevard St.-Germain she cured a consumptive patient of twenty-five years; in one of the hotels of the "Isle," where she first penetrated in the rôle of accoucheur, she was subsequently called in to treat the young husband suffering from heart trouble: her skill inspired implicit confidence. Her air of authority was one of the causes of her success. She possessed that inexplicable faculty of ascendency that gives such power to a doctor. Her sex counted for nothing. The men themselves submitted to her moral prestige and had great faith in her judgment.

But Gueméné suffered to see this change in the clients of Thérèse. He was content to know that she was occupied with women and children. On the contrary, *she* was flattered to have masculine patients. She boasted to him of each new patient. Notwithstanding his confidence in her, he was secretly troubled when she returned to him in the evening, a little weary, caressing, claiming the sweetness of tenderness after tasting the sweets of power. He thought of her by the bedside of those men-patients; he could see her making the auscultations, the percussions, the examinations; he had the indefinable impression that she recalled those medical intimacies, that her eyes still held the persistent vision of those interviews with nudity. Those scientific contacts obsessed him with a cruel sense of jealousy that tortured him. He avowed all this one day to Thérèse; he could no longer disguise what he endured, but the scruples of her husband amused the young wife.

"Well, my poor darling! Are you going to make scenes through your jealousy of my patients? You would do right to take umbrage if I were a fashionable woman that passed her nights in a ballroom in the arms of a score of men who embraced me one after the other—and you are

alarmed at the idea of my being at the bedside of a patient? But I am no longer a woman when I treat a patient."

He felt the force of her argument and raised no further objections, but his caresses lost something of their delicacy through those souvenirs of her profession that would arise between them. Her eyes no longer held that mystery of innocence; she seemed less sacred; she seemed to have lost that character of holiness that certain men wish to find in their wives.

. . . . .

That summer they made a tour in Switzerland, where Madame Jourdeaux, to whom Gueméné had recommended the air of the mountains for the little André, joined them. They met together at the same hotel, which she had selected on the advice of the doctor. The widow was intimidated by the doctoress, who did not understand her. When Thérèse declared frankly to her husband that she found Madame Jourdeaux rather shallow, very simple, and not very intelligent, he defended her warmly.

"No, no, you are mistaken. She may not be a brilliant woman, but she possesses a mind clear and discerning, and great good sense."

Silent, sad, despite her pleasing face, Madame Jourdeaux was charming in her travelling dress. She had discarded the widow's *crêpe* veil, and wore a dust-cloak when making excursions. Thérèse wore a similar cloak; and as the two women were of the same height and size, save a little stouter in the case of the widow, Gueméné sometimes mistook her for his wife in the distance. This mistake gave him the strange sensation that they were in some way related, and might have been sisters.

Madame Jourdeaux was a subject of much attraction. When she was seated on the terrace of the hotel, the men

would stop to admire her. With that sweetness of expression at once gentle and sad, she appealed to the masculine heart, and above all by the modest bearing that set off her beauty and made her an exceptional type. This interest which she aroused did not escape the notice of Gueméné. He was flattered by it, proud to possess so faithful and charming a friend. He enjoyed taking the little boy for strolls on the mountain paths. He was a pretty, intelligent child, full of curiosity and merry chatter. His sweet, flute-like voice could be heard a mile away in that pure, rarefied atmosphere. Gueméné answered patiently every question, while the people passing them regarded the boy in admiration, mistaking him for a son of the doctor. The very fact of that very natural surmise pleased the poor man; he unconsciously drew himself up proudly under that supposed paternity.

Thérèse found there a group of rich Russian students. They scarcely left her, and she, loving her profession, could not escape it even in that simple country place—the practice of it pursued her in the person of those fashionable representatives of her calling. The ladies made a circle apart, where they talked of medical science, devoured the medical news, discussed Boussard, admired Artout, and held dissertations on their hospitals, when they were not pondering their *Thèses*. The doctoress Gueméné, by right of her celebrity, was enthroned among them, giving advice to which all listened, while she exulted in the society of her young confrères. During this time Fernand promenaded with the little Jourdeaux on the banks of the lakes or read the newspapers on the terrace. Madame Jourdeaux occupied her usual seat on a secluded bench, alone, constantly embroidering, the needle in her hand with its daintily upraised little finger, flashing in and out with that incessant movement. All who observed her were touched by her melan-

choly; she felt herself neglected, and many sighs escaped her over that unending work of embroidery.

One morning the Gueménés recognised Boussard at a table in the dining-room of the hotel. His slight shoulders and enormous bald head were just visible over a basket of flowers, but his near-sighted, thoughtful eyes did not perceive the surprised glances of his friends.

"Look!" exclaimed Thérèse in the words of the students, "there is the patron!"

When the *déjeuner* was finished Thérèse and her husband went to greet him with laughing welcome. He remained cold and somewhat bored by the meeting. He bore himself, however, with that discreet civility which the master or professor extends to his pupils or confrères in public. Thérèse, with that deference felt by the student for the oldest of their masters, speedily withdrew, but when she approached her young friends the Russian students, did not hesitate to point out the great man, saying:

"Look! that is him—Boussard."

They stared at him eagerly, reverently, like a god that was suddenly revealed to them. Thérèse sought in her box the last work from his pen on therapeutics, then, crowding around the book in the reading-room, they passed the afternoon discussing it and listening to Thérèse's learned explanations of that valuable addition to medical literature.

At dinner there were two places vacant beside Boussard. The Gueménés wished to take them, but, feeling that the Master desired to be alone, they sat at an adjoining table. Autumn had come, and the night descended quickly. The guests dined by lamplight. It was a cheering scene: the golden light reflected in the mirrors the fruits of September, melons, grapes, and flowers perfuming the atmosphere and adorning the tables. There was a constant exchange

of talk among the tourists that rendered the repast gay and noisy. At a little distance from her friends Madame Jourdeaux kept her eyes religiously on her napkin. It was late, and the hall almost empty, when a new arrival entered, a slim, graceful woman in a long black redingote, the face half-concealed by the travelling veil. Thérèse trembled as she recognised that sibylline figure; she drew near to her husband and said in a whisper:

"There is Madame Lancelevée!"

For many months a rumour prevailed in medical circles which coupled the names of Boussard and the famous doctoress. Some believed an engagement existed between them, others considered it a purely platonic affair, but the majority looked upon them as lovers. The bravado of the young woman in showing her infatuation for the teachings of the Master gave rise to this gossip, although no one could prove anything and no one had surprised them together, while at the Amphitheatre they were never seen exchanging a word after the lessons. Thérèse had always defended her great *camarade*.

"What they say is absurd," she would protest. "Madame Lancelevée never commits what might be called an indiscretion; there is no woman who possesses more dignity, more pride, or moral strength. She is not a woman of impulse. I can vouch for her. As to her marriage, that is a false report." But on the evening in question Thérèse was astonished to see the doctoress enter the *salle-à-manger* and deliberately take a seat at the table beside Boussard. That cold personage felt a thrill of joy and surprise. They shook hands, then Madame Lancelevée raised her veil and in a low voice began to speak unreservedly. Without doubt she was not expected so soon, but at the last moment she had decided to come.

Boussard's glance searched the Gueménés, whom he

had just saluted, but very discreetly. Those involuntary witnesses of that apparently secret meeting slipped away. Once outside, Fernand exclaimed :

" Then it is true, all this gossip."

" Never ! " responded Thérèse generously. " Madame Lancelevée is an honest woman ; it is only a chance meeting, that is all."

But though she would not acknowledge it, she had seen the cold face of Boussard glow with pleasure when his eyes fell on the traveller who had taken the seat beside him, and she was convinced that it was not an unexpected meeting between those two mysterious persons. She had said loyally : " What is that to us ? We do not see those things " ; yet the thought of the possible frailty of her celebrated confrère troubled her. She sought by the wildest flights of imagination to find excuses that would condone that suspicious meeting.

The following morning, as she was reading her letters on the balustrade of the terrace, the couple appeared behind one of the glass doors commanding the staircase leading to the bedrooms. Boussard hesitated on seeing Thérèse, but Madame Laneclevée, with the victorious smile and gracious sweetness of a woman who has found love, spoke to him, and then boldly advanced alone to greet her friend.

Thérèse blushed as her gaze rested on the gown of the doctoress whom the Paris world had never seen but in the severest of black robes. She wore a gown of pearl-grey foulard trimmed in rich lace ; the change transformed her into a new woman. The eyes under their superb brows were brilliant with happiness as she pressed the hand of Thérèse warmly and with frank deliberation explained :

" You are astonished to see me here ; it is reciprocated.

I have come to join Dr. Boussard and pass a few days with him here, among the mountains"; and as Thérèse hesitated, silent and secretly shocked, yet at the same time moved to indulgence for this traitor and sinner against the noble code of the Princesses of Science, Madame Lancelevée, divining her disapproval, caught her hand again and pressed it affectionately.

"My little one," she said, "do you judge me as one lost—wicked—a sinner against society?"

Their eyes met in a look of loyal friendship.

"I do not judge you," answered Thérèse.

"That suffices for me," continued the doctoress. "I do not hide it. I have never had reason to be ashamed, and least of all now. We have loved for two months. We ignore the world. We retain our independence, but we are no longer alone in the world. Dr. Boussard wishes to marry me; but you know, dear, my views on the marriage of women-doctors. We are impossible as wives. You are the one beautiful exception to the rule. He permits me to keep my liberty entire, without the least obstacle, without the *arrière-pensée* of those who owe a duty to their home. Our motto is: 'Neither husband nor children.' I have said that a hundred times. But when I find by chance a love like that of my great and beloved friend, I feel that I cannot reject it. I was absolute mistress of my heart, myself, and deliberately, fully conscious of my act, I have given myself to him. I no longer believe in the religious marriage, which was the ideal of my youth, and I believe less still in the legal marriage, which is so easily broken and is nothing more than the imitation of the other. Neither is lasting. I feel that I disconcert you, but what would you have me say? I am acting according to my conscience."

Thérèse gradually took in the full meaning of that

marriage of mutual freedom. It was most repugnant to her sense of honour and delicacy. Yet it gave her more pain to see a woman of such high gifts set up an example that conflicted with her real nobleness of mind and character. She had no arguments to combat against the reasoning of her friend. She felt it would be useless to raise them. "You astonish me," she answered gently. "You know, for all that, dear friend, that I admit all liberal ideas, but yours seem to me to be a little perverted; but you are, yourself, an exception to the rule."

The sweetness of character of that young confrère, who gave her so freely the credit of her charity and esteem, touched the proud doctoress despite herself. She opened her heart for the first time to that gentle friend. It was a woman transformed by love that stood before Thérèse.

"I am happy," she exclaimed, with passionate abandon as her eyes filled with tears. The lovers kept apart from the little world of the hotel: Boussard, wrapt in the dream of love that enveloped him, impenetrable under the mask that hid that tender yet fierce passion which came so late into his troubled life. She never left him, she was drowned in the ecstasy of that revelation of love. They were always together, and, to the people around them, seemingly cold and distant. The Parisians at the hotel watched them curiously. Madame Lancelevée was well known to them through the portrait representing her in her laboratory surrounded by phials and instruments of medicine. She was to them the cold, austere woman of science, while Boussard remained the man of marble, cold, strange, mysterious. Never, since the scandal of his divorce, had he been so sad as he was now through the equivocal position imposed upon him by this strange love affair. His fathomless grey eyes, sunken under the arch of frowning brows, revealed nothing of the torment of

his soul, torn between love and honour. Often when walking in the mountain paths, by the side of that adorable companion who would not be his wife, they met Gueméné promenading with the little child of Madame Jourdeaux. The two men would exchange grave looks as they saluted one another. Both suffered through that which will be the eternal enemy of man, the *pride* of woman. They continued their separate roads, one by the side of that selfish, exacting spirit in the form of genius and beauty; the other leading by the hand the child of another.

. . . . .

"See now, my darling," said Thérèse one day to Fernand, "how unjust you are to me! I have given you my whole life, without reserve and without a mercenary motive. You are not like that poor Boussard, who does not look very happy in the honeymoon of that love affair. The doctoress has declared her wish, and he must bow to it. Oh! that is the woman friend! And you! you complain of your wife."

Gueméné gave her a long look; her lack of comprehension irritated him. Thérèse had no suspicion of the suffering she caused him with her artless ideal of the intellectual married woman. She had fearlessly entered conjugal life. She became reconciled to the storm of whims and eccentricities of her husband against her dreams of ambition. She deemed herself wise in giving way sometimes to those little vanities that please men in the way of dress. "Madame Lancelevée," said Fernand finally, with a touch of anger, "has more loyalty than you. That is all." Thérèse, in choking tones, demanded an explanation. Once again he unbosomed his heart; repeated the history of his grievances; showed how he had been "taken in" as a husband; that she had only sought in marriage a diversion from the fatigue of her profession, which

was her only aim, her only object in life; he had borne himself honourably through his sense of natural reserve and decency, curbed his anger, and respected her terms although she had wounded him cruelly.

Then Thérèse in her turn reproached him. "I have sacrificed, to the maternity you desired, the Thesis that would have classed me in the same rank with Madame Lancelevée. I have given up, for your sake, my studies in the clinic of Boussard; I have refused the operations with Artout; I gave up my intention of taking a course of study under Janivot, because his establishment was too far, and you would have disapproved of my absence. Have I not given up bacteriology owing to the lack of a laboratory at home? Is it not through my marriage that I have not been able to work at the École, that I have not become some one, done something? If I am only an ordinary doctoress, unknown, and content with a small practice, it is for the reason that I love you, that alone. Without a house to take my time, without the care of your comfort, without that maternity, without all these exacting duties, I might have counted for something in the medical world to-day."

"I am an obstacle to your glory. Our marriage presses too heavily on your shoulders, Thérèse. I take up too much of your life. Do you wish to be free?"

She smiled bitterly as she answered:

"It is too late now; we are married for eternity."

They faced each other for a moment, all love gone from their eyes, only the bitterness of anger between them. The interview had become intolerable to Fernand; he left her standing in the room and went for a walk, to restore him, in the little orchard on a slope behind the kitchens of the hotel. It was the favourite playground of the little André. There the child would amuse himself

constructing a garden made of tiny hillocks of gravel, in which he planted sprigs torn from the boxwood. The child, already a dreamer, loved to wander there, never looking higher than the pear-trees above the low wall.

When Gueméné appeared the boy was walking with little steps after the manner of a somnambulist. "Of what are you thinking?" asked the doctor softly, forcing himself to smile.

The child timidly bit his nails as he answered: "I made believe that I was an explorer, that I had arrived among the savages, and—perhaps they were about to kill me."

Gueméné, with his nerves overstrung, caught the infection of that childish imagination, and beheld him already a man, imperious, eager, loving the unknown and its dangers, anxious for the glory of heroism, and thinking nothing of sorrow and death.

"Have a little race," he said, with a touch of pity—"play the horse. You will have enough to think later about those things that give you fear."

He felt a singular affection for the little boy, as he would have loved his own.

"Will it please you to see me play the horse?" asked the boy in his flute-like voice. "Then look!"

He was off with a bound into the path, his little elbows raised in the air, striking the borders and sending the stones flying under his little feet, as he rushed here and there between the rows laden with fruit. In a little while he returned, red, panting, his small face raised to his big friend, whom he expected to see quite wild with pleasure over his racing powers. Gueméné felt a profound emotion to see the innocent efforts of the child to please him.

"You are a good little one, a good little one," he repeated.

The sense of his tragic conjugal position, the memory of those terrible words of Thérèse, the regret for his dead child, and the tenderness inspired in him by the little son of his friend overwhelmed him; his breast heaved with suppressed sobs, and all the while the sweet voice beside him murmured, "Then you are pleased with my little race, aren't you?"

A great sigh escaped him, shook him so strongly that the child raised his eyes to the face of his suffering friend. The little one saw the tears come in those kind eyes bending over him. A feeling of terror seized him, and he set out on another run, but this time in the direction of the hotel. When he gained the chamber of his mother he told her that his big friend was very sad, and was weeping there alone in the orchard.

. . . . .

The vacation of the Gueménés had come to an end. The following day they left for Paris. Madame Jourdeaux, moved by a feeling she could not quite understand, was anxious about the doctor; she divined the tragedy of his soul. She wished to see him alone before his departure, that she might offer him the consolation of a friend. She did not see him at the table d'hôte, as he had taken his last meal in his chamber. She questioned her little son.

"What did Monsieur Gueméné say to him? Did he embrace him? What made the tears come?"

But the child could only answer by repeating, "Oh! I don't know. . . . I was very obedient. He told me to run. I had a race to please him . . . then he wept . . . "

Boussard and Madame Lancelevée were setting out for an excursion in the mountains when Thérèse and her husband were entering the railway omnibus. Gueméné could see the lovers disappear and reappear many times, until he gradually lost sight of them in the turnings of the

road. He was haunted by a vision of that remarkable couple, whose sovereign passion was powerless to unite them absolutely. Finally the train started, and he found himself face-to-face with his wife in the solitude of the carriage.

Thérèse, harassed by remorse, suffered humbly in silence. All that she had said on the impulse of the moment caused her to-day atrocious regret. She would be happy to throw herself on her knees before Fernand, to supplicate him with words of passionate contrition. The most tender appeals came to her lips, but she felt too much the torpor of her husband's love; she had killed love like one who commits a crime under the spell of a nightmare sleep.

"He would repulse me," she thought. "I will wait." It was in this spirit of dull hostility they returned to their happy home nestling in the verdure on the end of the old Island.

III

FERNAND willingly pardoned her, but he could not forget; she was absolved with kisses so cold that they wounded more than they consoled her.

She wrung her hands and moaned before him:

"I have never regretted our love . . . I bless it, I love it; those words escaped me involuntarily. That was all."

But he remembered her always in that distant hotel, magnificent in her insolent scorn, declaring that their love had spoiled her life. Her anger, it is true, had influenced her thoughts, but at the same time it had forced her to speak truthfully, to lay bare her hidden ideas by tearing away the veil that had kept them concealed so long. Then under stress of that excitement Thérèse had deplored the loss of her liberty, the arrest of her intellectual flight, the shackles that fettered her ambition. He could not rid himself of the suspicion that, under all her caresses there lingered a grudge against that passion that chained her, that marriage that made of her a prisoner.

Then he fell under the same spell of melancholy depression that possessed him during his bachelor days when he lived alone in that house of their love, and peopled it with visions of their happy married life. October came. The flowing thoroughfare of the river was alive with the procession of boats bearing the apples which the trains had brought from Auvergne, Normandy, Brittany to unload at Charenton, where the Seine bore the boats loaded with carts just to Paris. Every morning, under the windows of the Isle,

the convoy of boats defiled, heralded by the mocking whistle of the black chimney stacks as they saluted the bridges and then passed under the low stone arches.

The rosy, chubby-cheeked, shining apples, the wrinkled, earthly-hued russets, pale Canadas the tint of lemons, heaped in the pits of the barges, gliding like gigantic hollow pumpkins over the smooth water towards the quay of the Hôtel-de-Ville, where they were ranged in lines for the winter, and sending, in the rainy season, an odour of sweet pulp and straw to perfume that picturesque corner.

Gueméné beheld for the fourth season that voyage of the apples, one of the unalterable things of the many customs of old Paris. Each time it was under different emotions. The first time he had noted that old custom with curious surprise: he had been full of the poetry of his courtship and betrothal. The following year he had his child born of Thérèse, but his happiness was saddened by the reproaches of his young wife. Then, with the return of autumn, the barges of perfumed fruits reappeared. A radiant epoch dawned for him in his profession with the success of his laboratory studies, the discovery of the antineoplastic serum, while his home was brightened by the smiles of that little being that seemed already to understand him in its mute fashion. And now the apples, again torn from their homes in the branches of their faraway trees, journeyed along the river, arriving punctually with the return of the season to offer their odorous burden for the yearly markets. But the child was no longer in that cold home; his little cradle was empty, like the poor father's sad heart, despoiled by that slow, cruel experience which had estranged him from his wife. Gueméné felt that the poetry of the passage of the apples had departed with the poetry of his existence.

It was in a perfect frenzy of work that he returned to

the laboratories in the École. He passed many hours bending over the tables of chemistry extending the length of the hall before the immense bay windows, where the glass panes were grimy with the rains of winter. Boussard sent him pieces of anatomy, and he isolated himself anew to search for the cancer microbe. He donned the white blouse, and with the eye riveted to the microscope, gave himself up to that enthralling study, seeking with trembling and starts of powerless desire to meet some trace of that invincible enemy.

Then he prepared the results, combining them with salts, feeling his way to prove those ferments. Sometimes Boussard would stop in passing to regard his work, his grey eye under the monocle lighting up with interest . . . then with a brief word of comment he continued on his way to the next laboratory, in which he worked.

. . . . .

One afternoon Thérèse was walking along the boulevard St.-Germain, her thoughts full of a case of infantile diphtheria that she judged alarming, when she met Madame Adeline at the corner of the rue Ancienne-Comédie. She was alone, and evidently much pressed for time, but on seeing Thérèse stopped and called her by name.

"Great heavens! What has become of you, my dear friend? We never see you anywhere now."

"I am very busy with my work," answered Thérèse. The other woman found her changed: it seemed to her that she had lost some of that refined youthfulness which she had preserved so long after her marriage. Madame Adeline exclaimed in her brutal way:

"Tell me, is it true, this report I hear, that you have broken off from us?"

"Who has said I have broken with you?" asked Thérèse haughtily.

"We do—the medical body; that your medicine is finished—everybody says it. If it is true, dear, I will give you my warmest compliments. You have the means to do it, with your husband by your side, the papa who has given you a dot that preserves you from being obliged to make visits at forty sous a visit, that permits you to remain quietly at home by the fireside. Ah! my little girl, I am fifteen years older than you, and that gives me the right to speak. Well! if I have any advice to give you it would be to say you are justified in doing as you have done."

"I have not the least intention to give up the practice of medicine," said Thérèse coldly.

"Then, it was all a lie. Ah! I wish I were in your skin, my dear. Sometimes my poor head is giddy with all I have to do. I am at the end of my strength."

Her broad face wore a look of weariness that touched Thérèse.

"What troubles you?" she asked kindly.

"Oh, the annoyances at home; they are killing me. The money does not come, and then there is the waste, and the worry that one cannot tell about: my daughter Lucie, who is fifteen years old, and has read all the books in my medical library. The boys are frightfully lazy: the elder is always hanging about the Stock Exchange. What am I to do? Can I work more than I do?"

"But—Monsieur Adeline," Thérèse ventured to say.

The poor woman gave a sweeping gesture of discouragement, as she exclaimed bitterly:

"Ah! Monsieur Adeliné; yes, Monsieur Adeline." She was reticent, as she did not wish to decry her husband. She could not speak more, and with difficulty restrained her tears. Then, with an effort to regain her composure, she smiled sadly, and said:

"Take example by me. Be always good to your husband; my little girl, spoil him. Pautel tells me that he has changed since the death of your baby. I hope you will soon give him another!"

Thérèse, accustomed to the vulgar frankness of Madame Adeline, smiled without answering. The doctoress continued:

"We must be up to a trick or two to keep the men at home. They like the house gay and lively; they need us there. . . . Your husband is like the rest of them; he will be devilishly proud if you do that what every one says. It was Artout who, not seeing you every morning at Beaujon, told the news of your retreat. Ah! my dear, I was happy for Gueméné's sake, and yours also."

She shook Thérèse's hand, and pointed at a high house in the old street.

"I have a client waiting for me there, a poor drunkard who never pays me."

She went away to keep that profitless appointment, always energetic and conscientious, doing her work with the double needles of material need and professional duty—both of which equally stimulated her—punctual in her visits, a true doctor, giving to all who asked her valuable services without a thought or care of the reward.

. . . . .

The following morning Thérèse went to the hospital Beaujon. The false report of her retirement offended her; her honour seemed at stake. She wished to be seen in the class of Artout: as it was frequented by many young doctors, the report would thus be stopped at its source. As she entered the hall the first one to meet her was the chief—a black cap on his large, noble head that looked more suitable to a bishop's mitre, a white apron hiding his powerful limbs, the sleeves of his blouse turned

up, showing the hairy arms, and on the right hand a rubber glove.

"Ah! there at last is the doctoress Gueméné," he cried, while a smile of welcome beamed on his heavy face.

As he spoke all present turned towards the elegant, slender young woman, robed in a fashionable gown and rich furs. Her gaze passed slowly from bed to bed, and then rested on the people present. There were three young surgeons, a dozen of pupils, three foreign students and two little French *bénévoles*, making their first year of medical study, mere children just out of the *Lycée*—fourteen months ago—and looking more like big boarding-school boys in their white smocks.

Then Artout, with his good-humoured sense of the old bachelor, that ignored all subtle surmises, introduced, in his original manner, to the young men and the future doctoresses, his ideal of the woman-doctor in the person of Thérèse.

"Madame Gueméné is one of my talented young confrères, and I shall be happy if she returns now and then to her place in my service. She will be a beautiful example to the young girls, who are the doctors of to-morrow, and after to-morrow. She represents the type of the new woman. It is always difficult to create a new rôle in our profession, our society. Madame Gueméné has found the right formula; that she has made her own by a standard that I would recommend to you all, young ladies, if you wish to exercise your profession as men without ceasing to be true women. This young doctoress can teach you how to become an excellent doctor, and at the same time make a charming home for her husband, and render him the happiest man in the world."

Thérèse smiled with pleasure over the words of her old master, who understood her so well. Why could not

Fernand have been present to hear the praise of Artout? Her heart swelled with resentment against the one who would destroy her career through his selfish love.

"Madame," concluded Artout, as he put on the other rubber glove to begin his examinations, "I invite you to a most interesting operation to-morrow that I shall make on the woman that you see there in bed 15. Come while I examine her; it will make a beautiful diagnosis."

Thérèse felt again all the insidious fascination of those studies in the wards of the hospital. She loved it like a religious who seeks the church for its sensuous attractions of the incense, the candles, the mystic atmosphere. The odour of the iodoform, the quiet of the white walls, the human mysteries of disease and death stretched out on the white beds, all recalled her ardour as a house-surgeon, her pleasure in the work of bygone days. And above all, Artout asked her to return; he reproached her for that long absence, challenged her to the daily routine, the unceasing work, the constant watch involved in clinic practice. He showed her a strange tumour that she recognised as one similar to that of one of her patients. The resemblance of the two cases was confirmed by the diagnosis. It formed a most interesting subject to them.

"You must draw up an account of this," cried Artout. He wished with all his simple heart that there were more like Thérèse in her steady enthusiasm for work.

She resumed her attendance at the Beaujon, and the new start awakened all those intellectual joys that she had believed lost to her. . . .

One evening Gueméné returned later than usual for dinner. Thérèse was already at table, having work to do during the evening, she explained; but her husband scarcely heard in his eagerness to impart news that would surprise her.

"I have seen Boussard to-day at his laboratory. I showed him three guinea-pigs that I had vaccinated a month ago with the antineoplastic liquid I have called *toxiline degré* 3. Eight days after, I inoculated all three with cancer in a wound in the breast. This afternoon Boussard examined the scars of the wound, took the weight and circulation of the animals. Their general state gave no sign of any of those preliminary conditions pointing to the malignant tumour of cancer. 'My dear boy,' he said, 'I believe this is a success.'"

"But, my poor friend," answered Thérèse, "cancer is only amenable to the knife. All that is premature. Your micro-organism is a little too new. Your specification is not at all proved. Be careful that your process does not mislead the doctors and that patients may not be lost through those vain attempts."

She thought of her methods and principles, how infinitely more captivating in the security they offered; she spoke of the uterine tumours that she had cured, of the knife of Artout, always employed so fortunately, that removed so skilfully the *part du mal* from the palpitating entrails of the sufferer.

Gueméné was silent. His beautiful enthusiasm of the searcher was extinguished by that cold reception coming from his wife, already too preoccupied with other things to give time or attention to his discovery. He had returned to Thérèse that evening, with the strong instinct that forces a man to confide all to his companion, to seek in her arms affectionate consolation; but with one word she had rendered him mute, broken the spell of his hope. He could have wept with disappointment. Perhaps, after all, she was right; and he recalled his first check—the death of the unfortunate Jourdeaux. Again he thought of Boussard; he believed in his success. With that idea he felt a mysterious

exultation arise in his heart. Who, then, could he confide in? to whom tell his hopes? from whom receive the uplifting encouragement so necessary to him?

Then he remembered that kind, discreet friend, who had probably returned by this time. He felt a great relief of mind, and resolved to see her the following day, to yield himself entirely to the happy influence which that charming woman had gradually exercised over him.

. . . . .

He found her seated as usual by the window, busy with her embroidery, the little boy playing at her feet with an army of paper cuirassiers spread over the carpet. The lamp was not yet lit as he entered joyously, his soul thrilling to the echo of that decisive voice saying:

"I believe it is a success."

At his appearance the placid face of his friend altered: she grew pale; the eyelids fluttered; the lips were white as she murmured:

"Well, well! How are you?"

She looked at him reproachfully, not having seen him since that day in Switzerland when André left him weeping in the orchard of the hotel. During the six intervening weeks her pity had nourished itself upon that sad memory, her idle imagination occupied itself in dreams of sweet compassion over that secret sorrow. She thought over it constantly, inventing the cause of it according to her moods. She bore herself like a mysterious mourner, putting away all thoughts of gaiety, reminiscences of music, and all useless distraction in her sympathy for that suffering friend so far from her and to whom she could offer no consolation. Now when he reappeared she could do no more than give him a gentle pressure of the hand in silence.

Then, as though their intimacy had suddenly returned since their meeting in the hotel, and unconsciously feeling

at ease near his friend, Gueméné cried, "I am bold enough to declare that I am hungry, and I have come to beg for one of those nice little lunches that you know so well how to prepare."

He felt, with the intuition of the man, that she would be pleased by his request; he knew the womanly devotion that prompted her, like most tender souls, to minister to the needs of others, that she dispensed her acts of kindness with the affectionate, unselfish zeal of the biblical Martha. Madame Jourdeaux beamed, and set to work at once, her head a little giddy with the unexpected pleasure of seeing her friend and the delight of looking after his comfort. She foraged among the preserves, the box of biscuits, sent the servant to the cellar for wine, arranged the cakes in the plates, soiled her hands in peeling the pears remaining in the fruit basket on the buffet, thinking that she would never finish; but in five minutes she had the collation ready, and returned to the room with the little round table, which bloomed with amber fruit and wine.

Gueméné was delighted. She watched him as he ate, a world of thoughts flowing over her; she sighed, and could scarcely restrain her tears, saying very tenderly:

"My poor friend!"

He was softened under the glow of kindness emanating from that sweet woman friend; her care and sympathy, like a warm mantle, enveloped his soul that had been chilled by the coldness of his home. He said nothing, but let her sweet attentions cradle him into a state of delightful rest, while he thought of the many discomforts to which Thérèse had subjected him, things that he had never confided to any one, and that seemed to-day, he knew not why, more cruel than ever before.

Madame Jourdeaux invited him to smoke after the wine, but he refused with a laugh, protesting against smoking in

her room, that he had no desire for a cigarette; but she insisted, pressing him until he obeyed. She was one of those women who delight in making others happy, who was ingenious in creating pleasures and making a voluptuary of those she loved.

He smoked slowly, enjoying to the full that soothing influence; and as he puffed the pearly clouds about him, yielding to the languid intoxication of the fumes, said dreamily, "You have always believed in me . . . you have always urged me to work. To-day, I am perhaps on the eve of success. . . . I have convinced Boussard."

"Ah!" she said, not with sadness over that discovery which had come too late, "at last, at last!"

She could say no more, and he continued:

"I believe I have found the vaccine for which I have searched these two years. Hélas! I say I believe. Is one ever sure? Perhaps Boussard is mistaken in giving me encouragement. One should not speak of those things before they are formally confirmed, indisputable. Ah, if this time it was a sure thing!"

Then that timid, simple woman found eloquent words to persuade him into belief in himself.

"It is a definite thing this time, I assure you, and I know nothing, not even the A B C of your science; but I have often strange intuitions, and success attends you. I know it, I feel it, the same as if the world of science had already offered you the homage of their admiration. You have said—one is never sure. All the better, to work always, to struggle always, to keep on digging in the black mine of the unknown. Nothing is lost, no effort is sterile. Each one of your experiences will throw a little light on those shadows. Each one of your failures reduces the field of your errors, each false track will make you more resolute to find the right road, with the result that little by little you

will arrive at the great door of success. Oh! but it is beautiful—that work!"

He listened with astonishment to that delicious glorifier of his labour accomplished for many months without joy, without a word of comfort from a friend to encourage him. She poured out in one moment all that he had lacked since the beginning of his labours, and for all those things he had endured in his intellectual solitude she offered him consolation. Her charity was roused by the sight of his discouragement, as the wounds of a beggar excite pity: she pitied his doubts, his struggle, his hopelessness.

"No, no," he said despondently; "it is all chance, luck. There is a legion who search, and only one who will find. Shall I be that one? I have lost hours and hours in that laboratory of the École. I have invented chemical processes and tests that have produced nothing, and experimented on a world of poor little beasts whose sufferings were useless. To-day, thanks to three guinea-pigs, a demonstration has been made; but to what end? It is not three animals that can irrefutably prove my discovery. I must prove it by a hundred—a thousand. I must give ten years of my life—a life of constant groping with experiments, of pitiful and painful efforts, and then, after all, they may say of me—He was a fool."

She was moved to greater eloquence, in her effort to defend him from himself.

"The great men are not mad," she answered. "Chance does not make great men, they are the sons of the work to which they have consecrated themselves. Oh, do not be discouraged, do not lose confidence in yourself, I implore you. It is you and no other who will discover the cure for that terrible cancer. You will be successful, to-morrow you will triumph. It is not Monsieur Boussard who has said it, but I who say it, I, who tell you that success will be yours."

Gueméné drunk her words. He was intoxicated by her faith in him; this simple, sweet woman, knowing nothing of science, had more influence on him than the learned and scientific authority of Boussard. He looked at her with beaming eyes that thrilled her as he sighed deeply. It seemed that all the hidden pain of his heart escaped in that sigh as he murmured:

"Oh! how you comfort me."

Then he spoke again with renewed hope:

"When new failures come, when I am on the point of abandoning everything, as I often am, I shall come to regain my courage from you, to be cheered and strengthened by your incomparable friendship."

Listening to his words, she understood the haughty arrogance of his wife that had crushed him, and knew that his home was not congenial, as she had suspected for some time. When he was leaving, she pressed his hands warmly as she murmured:

"You are worthy of a great love and happiness!"

. . . . .

From that time Gueméné harboured, unknown to Thérèse, a pitiless criticism of her every act. He was irritated against her to a degree that rendered him exceedingly nervous. He studied her with an eagerness that revealed his desire to find her at fault. She had written an article giving an exhaustive report of the case of insidious tumour she had treated at the hospital Beaujon. The article appeared in the scientific journal styled the *Medical Progress*. Fernand believed that she was moved by a spirit of rivalry, that she was making a struggle to emulate his notoriety, and had weakened his prestige by this bold step. Instead of admiring her superb energy he saw her efforts in the light of selfishness and vainglory. Never before had he felt so keenly the loneliness and mismanagement of his home

without a wife's influence and direction. He made a fair income, but the honorarium of Thérèse was much greater. With their combined revenue they were in very comfortable circumstances, but through the terrible waste in the household expense, everything was swallowed up in that whirlpool of extravagance. When the end of the year arrived and the tradesmen's bills came pouring in, the Gueménés found they had not the sum necessary to make a complete settlement. They revised the double accounts and noted the bad debts, the patients who could not or would not pay. Then Gueméné, triumphant and ironical, made Thérèse feel the uselessness of her personal profits, and the part she played in the disorder and loss of the household. Her sense of justice and love of organisation was appalled by that discovery. She listened humbly to the remonstrances of Fernand, making no defence, but when she was alone in her study gave way to silent tears of bitter grief. He no longer resigned himself to meals at haphazard as formerly, sometimes good and sometimes bad, that he found at home and that he mostly ate alone. Thérèse, pierced by pecuniary fears, no longer refused the cases of accouchement, as she had done for many months. Like most women brought up in affluence, she had a dread of economy, because she understood it so little. She dismissed her carriage to save expense, and went afoot to all her visits. This fatigued her, so that she was unable to work in the evenings, and sought her bed worn out with exhaustion. When Fernand joined her he looked on her sleeping face amid the pillows coldly, without emotion. The electric light over the head of the bed cruelly revealed the wrinkles that fatigue had marked on her beautiful face. She looked fully her thirty years; he thought her old, and fancied he saw in that sleeping mask more strength than beauty. He tried to imagine what his life would be with a wife like Madame Jourdeaux.

What calm, what sweetness, what blessings would be his! He grieved over that poor young woman, the solitude of her life, the void in her heart. The friendship between them supplied, perhaps, a happiness that either of them would never know. Each had made a failure of life. The idea drew him closer to her: he resolved to see her more often.

For many reasons he had no longer a desire for that, confident in the excitement of his labour. He was at that moment full of anxieties and longings that were almost boyish. The combat that raged in his brain was like an epic where the least word changed the meaning of that struggle into horrible evil or sunk it into mediocrity. He continued his research on the three guinea-pigs. The little animals made good progress. Each day he weighed them, but one always weighed more than the other. He grew discouraged, doubted his work, and walked through the boulevard St.-Martin utterly oblivious of his sweet friend who had encouraged him by her faith and advice. She possessed the genius of comfort, that had appeased and vivified the soul of the young man.

The three little guinea-pigs, that she had never seen, continually occupied the mind of Madame Jourdeaux. The other guinea-pigs that were subjected to the same experiments did not interest her, but those first three were the oldest subjects of the process, and on them she centred all her hopes. She was moved by that remembrance, and thought how she would have caressed them with those beautiful fingers busy on the embroidery as she spoke of them to Gueméné.

One day he said to her:

"Ah! how well you know the secret of making one happy."

"Happy!" she repeated mechanically, in her embarrassment. "How, happy?"

"Without your friendship," he replied, "what would become of me?"

That innocent word "friendship" seemed to render their intimacy safe and good. It gave her courage. "You are sad," she said gently, "and I offer you my sympathy in return for all you have done for my poor husband. I do not know your sorrow, but I respect it. I understand it a little. . . ."

He buried his head in his hands and remained silent. She continued to speak very low:

"It is Madame Gueméné who has made you unhappy." He spoke more freely that day of the absent one of whom they thought constantly. He told her the virtues and qualities he loved most in women, which were precisely those of the gentle woman before him. She defended Thérèse, excused her. He was not happier for her pleading.

"You encourage my work," he said; "my wife, on the contrary, seems to set herself the task of ruining all my energy."

"She also works very much," explained Madame Jourdeaux. "It is natural that those who have serious cares should take no interest in the cherished ideas of others."

"Ah! that is exactly what I reproach her with," he sighed.

He had wounded his right hand while making a dissection, and for some days he was alarmed over the probable results. One evening he begged Madame Jourdeaux to renew the dressing. She turned pale and trembled a little, then she braced herself to bandage the wounded finger. She performed it slowly but skilfully, prolonging the process through her care and delicacy. When it was finished, she raised her eyes to those of her dear doctor. It was a look of ardent tenderness that shone in those

beautiful eyes. Gueméné felt that their friendship had grown closer, sweeter, through that little service.

Sometimes Gueméné abandoned himself to fits of excessive sadness. He spoke of his great love, that Thérèse had misunderstood. Then Madame Jourdeaux would take his hand and murmur words of pity and tenderness, and plead for Thérèse with all the innocent art of her pure soul. She would endeavour to electrify him by the alluring appeal to his ambition, the glory that would be his. He seemed, she told him, to have abandoned his work, to labour less, to neglect his laboratory. He explained to her the failure of his experiments on the little animals. Nothing had resulted from all his study and researches; that he must cure a cancer before he could proclaim his method to the world. She listened, lost in her dreams.

Every day found him with his kind friend. He came between times to seek for the collation she had always ready for him. The month of March arrived, and the little meal could be taken without lighting the lamp. The demi-obscurity of the half light coming from the enclosed court sufficed for their chat and made their intimacy more cosy. Gueméné had a relapse into a state of pitiable despondency. He appeared morose, irritable, and declared he had no more faith in himself or his vaccine, that toxiline that Boussard had patronised.

"Listen to me," said Madame Jourdeaux one day—her voice had an extraordinary ring—"do what I am going to ask you. I believe in your *anticancéreux*. I believe with all my soul and all my strength, I believe in it as I do in the sun that shines. I believe in you and your power. You have told me that the field of animals does not suffice for your experiments. Take *me*; make use of me; immune *me* with your toxiline, then after that inoculate *me* with cancer. I have no fear. I will do this as a proof of my

confidence in you, as a mark of my great friendship for you."

"My poor friend, my poor friend, what are you saying?"

But she was deaf to his words in the exultation that made her appear another being.

"I implore you," she cried in thrilling tones, "do not refuse me this. You will never win success unless you practise your experiments in the human field. That is your only chance, the human field; take there your science and skill, your great experience. Oh! I will be so happy, so happy! . . . I assure you I will have no fear. I shall not shrink or tremble the day you communicate to me that terrible disease. I know you can work that miracle. I have so great a confidence in you. . . ."

. . . . .

That day he left her in a state of bewilderment; he was ravished and lucid. She loved him! Ah! the sweetness, the pity of it. Oh! the tenderness, the devotion she had shown him for many weeks, and now, to-day, when tormented by the desire of that absolute proof of her faith in him, she had offered him her body, not in vulgar, passionate obedience to the law of pleasure, but as a pure sacrifice to the genius she believed he possessed. And that madness of enthusiasm in offering him the gift of herself, that intrepid spirit that would brave a terrible inmolation, that height of abnegation to which she rose through her love, dazzled him, fascinated him; he thrilled at the remembrance of her inspired face. . . .

At the first kiss he gave Thérèse, he understood whom he loved from henceforth and for ever.

END OF BOOK IV

BOOK V

I

ONE evening when Thérèse returned, weary after her day's work, oppressed by the unseasonable heat of the early spring, the maid knocked at her door, saying:

"Madame must not remove her hat; there is a young girl who wishes——"

The words were cut short by the appearance behind her of Lucie Adeline, who had followed her up the staircase, running two steps at a time like a child. She was the elder daughter of the doctoress, a brunette of fifteen years, with a bold and decided air. She rushed into the room, crying:

"Is Monsieur Gueméné here? Maman has sent me to ask him to come at once to see my little brother Julien, who is scalded."

"Your little brother, ah! great heavens," exclaimed Thérèse. "Is he still alive?"

Her first thought was of the unfortunate mother, but the girl replied:

"Yes, yes! If Monsieur Gueméné is here he must come immediately, immediately. I will take him in my hackney cab."

"No," responded Thérèse, a little surprised that her husband should be called in preference to herself by Madame Adeline; a confrère who claimed to hold her in such esteem, "Monsieur Gueméné does not return this evening, but I will come. I will follow you at once."

"Ah! but Maman said, Bring Monsieur Guéméné, I wish him to see Julien. She did not mention you. No doubt she considers him a better doctor than you, or herself; but there, you see Maman is very funny; she finds that a doctoress is very good for the practice, but for one of us she has more confidence in a man. It is stupid, but they are all like that. My word! Madame, I believe you are a much better doctor than your husband. I wish also to be a woman-doctor."

During this prattle, Thérèse hastened to put on her hat before the glass, collect the necessary instruments, and her gloves. The medical profession creates an admirable self-control and forgetfulness of self in the presence of danger. All Thérèse's thought centred on the child she was going to serve, although she felt keenly the slight put upon her. It was only when she was in the cab, seated beside that boyish little girl, that her *amour-propre* arose in protest. She was going to a bedside where they had disdained to call in her services, where her skill was not in demand. Then her dignity revolted; the idea came to her to return home and let Jeanne Adeline be at liberty to call another doctor, since that strange doctoress placed more confidence in a man. But the girl babbled away.

"There! Julien had a sore throat and Maman said to him this morning: I do not wish you to go to school. Afterwards, Monsieur Artout having telephoned her yesterday to come to-day for an operation, she left at nine o'clock for the boulevard Courcelles. At midday I returned from the High School, where I am preparing for my examination. Maman had not returned—no papa, nothing! Poor papa, he had not obtained his bitters. . . . Then we ate alone, all four. At half-past one I returned to the school with my little sister Georgette; Alfred, who is a day-pupil, went to the *Lycée*; Julien was left in charge of the

maid. She should have gone to the *lavoir*, but Maman bade her do the washing on the stove in the kitchen, that she might look after the little one. Well! the soap was missing, or the soda—I do not know which—and she ran to the grocer in the rue Ancienne-Comédie—an affair of only a minute, she said to Julien; but that did not prevent Julien from mounting a chair and raising the cover of the wash-boiler on the washing-machine to see what made the water boil up with the sound of a pump. The steam scalded him and he jumped back, pulling the washing machine with him, which tipped and sent the boiling water over his whole body. When the maid took off his clothes, she said the skin came off with them. Thank God, Maman came back at four o'clock, as Monsieur Artout had kept her to *déjeuner* with him; she did not dare refuse, fearing to offend him, because, as papa says, Monsieur Artout is the '*vache à lait*' of Maman, and he helps her like the good God Himself. As for me, I love Monsieur Artout also. I told him one day that I would like to be a doctor, and he cried, 'Why not?'"

"But," replied Thérèse, who had already forgotten her annoyance, "what part of the body of your little brother is scalded the most? What have they done for him? Have they bathed him?"

"Oh! no; surely not! Maman has, I believe, lost her head, and the poor boy screams terribly if we touch him."

"How old is the poor child?"

"Nine years, Madame. You would think he was ten, he is so tall."

The cab, following the quays, gained the narrow street of the rue Dauphine, where they were detained by the crowds of vehicles for some moments. Thérèse relived the hours when she awaited the death of her child, she seemed to feel all that the unhappy doctoress was suffering. As

she grew impatient over the delay she recalled all the remedies she had employed in the various cases that might be like that of the little boy. It was while surgeon at the hospital that she had those cases, not in her private practice. She remembered that Artout's treatment consisted of sub-nitrate of bismuth, and Boussard used picric acid. At last the cab stopped before the gloomy house in the rue Buci where Jeanne Adeline occupied the apartment on the *entresol*.

At the end of a dark corridor was the staircase. Thérèse groped with her feet until she found the first step. The girl had forgotten her anxiety during the drive, but now regained it and rushed up the stairs like a flash. She was so familiar with that dark staircase that she took it in three bounds. Thérèse clung to the banister and felt for each step by cautiously raising her foot. The house was pervaded by the sweetish odour of alkaline and soap-suds emanating from that deadly washing, that had vented its monstrous fury on the body of the poor child, and was still boiling gently on the stove in the kitchen.

No one was in sight to introduce Thérèse, as Lucie was already by the bedside of the little sufferer. She guided herself as best she could, opening at hazard the doors until she found the small *salle-à-manger* with its round table posed in the middle of a red rug. Next she found the tiny waiting-room, where the only light came by way of the evil-smelling court; a small passage containing a portmanteau and row of skirts hanging against the wall led from the waiting-room. Into this Thérèse groped and, opening a door, found herself in the room where the child lay moaning on a small iron bed. The mother was bending over him, mingling her tears with his moans.

Seeing Thérèse she cried:

"Ah! it is you that has come. Make an examination quickly. I am incapable of doing anything."

She sank beside the bed, helpless in her grief, and buried her face in her hands. Thérèse rapidly divested herself of gloves and jacket, throwing them on the big bed with its counterpane of red chintz. She raised the child, sustaining him by one arm under the shoulder-blades while she removed his little shirt. The poor little nude body was revealed, strong and supple; the breast heaved in starts that inflated the long, thin throat. The right side from the shouder to the thigh was marked by long red stripes and the skin raised in blisters that formed big opaque pearls of water. One of these was enormous, and resembled a transparent egg that had been perched on the hip.

All emotion forgotten, the brows knit, calm and self-possessed, Thérèse examined the burns with her keen, comprehensive glance. She summoned all her science and resources in view of the prompt action that was necessary to save the moaning, weeping child in her hands. Strange to say, she did not employ the caressing, wheedling manner that doctors usually give to sick children. Her mind was alert and busy. She, who had raised herself to the functions of the man-doctor, had need of too much energy to waste it in the sensitive feelings of her sex.

"Those of the arms are painful but not dangerous," said Thérèse, when she finished her examination. "The blisters on the hip must be opened, poor child: it will give him much suffering. Why have you not bathed him before the dressings?" "Ah! I know nothing more," groaned Madame Adeline. "Try everything, only quiet him." The servant brought the bath-tub, but it was too small for a boy of his size. Lucie declared that the wash-boiler would do, and her brother could sit down in it. Time pressed, but Thérèse, unaccustomed to the inconveniences of that poor home, was not dismayed. It is true she

could not avoid comparisons, and thought of the luxury and comfort of those old mansions in the Ile St.-Louis and the faubourg St.-Germain, where she was so often called. While she searched the humble *entresol* of Madame Adeline for the necessary things, she saw the cabinet of consultation, with its low windows reaching from ceiling to floor; the table of gynæcology was formed of a folding chair covered in green rep; for the work-table an old mahogany bureau had been utilised. It was in great disorder, scientific journals, and a new book of pathology lay open just as the doctor had left them, mixed up pell-mell among pamphlets and other medical brochures, as though hastily read and then cast aside. Madame Adeline did not read much. Her time was entirely taken up by her patients in the neighbourhood, the visits at forty sous each, the accouchements, and the extra medical work with Artout, who called her from time to time. She had not studied her science for twenty years, but she was sustained by her admirable memory, that never failed her. Thérèse looked over the two rooms crowded with furniture—at one side the girls, the other the boys, and was guided in the direction of the kitchen by the odour of boiling soap-suds. The maid was busy rinsing the linen in the "beautiful suds." Thérèse directed her to empty the boiler and superintended its cleansing. With her skirts tucked up, she went about giving her orders, looking into things, busy as though she had always known that damp, dirty kitchen, badly smelling, and badly lit by the butterfly gas jet, although the May sunshine was sparkling outside. When all was in readiness, she returned to the cabinet of Madame Adeline and searched for a slip of paper on which to write a prescription. The noise of the passing carts and cabs, the omnibuses with their loads of outside passengers, whose faces on a line with the windows of the room seemed to

penetrate the panes of glass, made a tumult of sound, and shook the windows, the bottles and glasses on the table, with their heavy rumbling. Suddenly the sound of singing was heard on the staircase. She listened; it was the voice of a man singing in quavering tones a popular air. Who was singing? The door of the apartment opened, and the voice penetrated into the room. Thérèse recognised the last verse of the *Internationale*.

"Ah!" she thought, "there is Monsieur Adeline. He is very gay. When he learns of the accident what a terrible shock it will be." She liked that "good Monsieur Adeline," he was so tranquil, so resigned, such an excellent husband. He was really a good man, but his honest life misled Thérèse, and the beautiful example he gave of the docile husband, who put up with the shortcomings of his wife won her sympathy. She looked up to greet the poor man, for whom such terrible emotion was in store; but it was the doctoress who stood before her. The two waited in the semi-obscurity of that room humid with the fumes of the back courtyard. Presently a man staggered into the room, his hat on the back of his head, and rolled into a chair, unable to walk a step farther. "It is warm," he said, in languid tones, without seeing Thérèse. "Lucie must go and buy me a pint of beer—very fresh,"

Madame Adeline seized Thérèse by the hand and pulled her into the consulting-room.

Then, in that miserable room, where she sold her science and skill in slices at twenty sous each, the poor woman, whom Thérèse had always seen so joyous, so brave, doing her prodigious work with so much pleasure, preserving in her middle age that gaiety *gauloise* of the little Parisian world—abandoned herself to the most bitter grief, unveiled her secret misery in pathetic words.

"There! you have seen him," she murmured very low, without releasing her hold on the hand of that friend more happy, more fortunate than she. "You have seen him. I have tried to hide the disgrace of his vice. I have done the impossible that no one should know of it. Each day he returns like this, sometimes more tipsy. Yesterday the *concierge* found him lying in an insensible condition on the staircase: he was brought up to me like a package of coals, knocking against the walls and doors. It is shameful! A man who was formerly so sober! It will kill me; I assure you, it will kill me. At first he drank very little, only an aperient now and then with the other gentlemen of the *économat*, but the taste gradually took possession of him until he was not satisfied with one absinthe, but two, then three, four, and now it is morning and evening, all day and all night. You have seen a man who is done for, finished! You can understand what sort of a life is mine: my child is dying, and my husband worse than dead—an object of repulsion!"

Her eyes were dry, and her once beautiful blonde hair, streaked with grey, fell in disordered masses over her temples. She was old, vanquished, wrinkled, notwithstanding her *bravoure*, her valiant good-humour, her heroic struggle with existence. Thérèse was deeply moved, her eyes filled with tears.

"My poor Madame Adeline!" was all she could say, as she pressed her hand with pity and sympathy.

"The worst is," continued the other, "that I myself am the sole cause of this ruin of my home. Oh! do not protest; I know it, I have reflected, and to-day I understand it. My life has been one long, great mistake. I should not have been a doctor. My duty was here in my home, to economise, to manage the household on the wages brought by my husband, to do the marketing

myself, to keep the pot boiling, to mend the linen, to comfort my husband and care for his children. But no! I was too ambitious, I loved to study, and I loved the glory of intellectual work. Why remain in the obscurity of a poor and humble home, when I felt capable of higher things? of a career that would open to me an interesting and distinguished existence? It is twenty years, dear, since the woman-doctor began to practise. It was an exceptional chance that brought you into notice. The journals speak of you as a rare case. It was more enticing than being shut up in three rooms watching the *pot-au-feu* and taking care of the husband and children. I had a beautiful dream. It made me work hard, but that did not frighten me. I passed five examinations successfully, and it was a proud day for me when the Board of Health gave me my certificate as doctor." She interrupted this recital of her life every few minutes to listen to the moans of her little son, and the babbling talk of her husband, whom the maid was scolding soundly, and forcing him to let her remove his boots and put on his slippers by the threat of removing the bottle of beer if he did not submit. Finally the child sank into a slumber, while the husband drank quietly, and dozed before the bottle on the table in the *salle-à-manger*.

When all was quiet the doctoress resumed her sad recital.

"He revolts me, disgusts me, but I pity him, and I forgive him. For ten years he was a model husband. His life, unfortunately, was not a happy one. Many times, when he returned from his work, he found the house empty or overrun by the noisy children. He loved me well: one would think he would have deserted me; but he never reproached me, forced himself to take my place, combed the children's hair, laced their boots, and tended

the soup when the maid was late. And there was the hope of making more money, that Artout would call me oftener for consultations, and that good fortune would smile on my work. But Artout was enticed by Madame Lancelevée; my consultations sank to a practice composed of poor women and maids out of work. I have had those who offered me ten sous to write a prescription! . . . And what a mess the housekeeping made! One servant at fifty francs a month did not suffice, I must have a woman in by the day, and pay her extra for the food of her children. . . . And the monthly bills of the grocer and butcher that I could never verify. It was the meat that they let go bad in the meat-closet, or the butter that was spoiled, the coffee, the sugar that they stole, and I could not prove it. Yes, it was impossible to guard against that invisible flight of money, that waste that grew daily worse. . . . To keep a house like that under the control of servants one would need to pick up fifteen thousand francs in the street. . . . I lived like a galley-slave. Thank God, I have a strong constitution; but I neglected my home more and more. Adeline was like a widower, always alone at night, when I did not get back from my work. You know how that is, my poor friend, many times when you are snugly in bed to be awakened by the bell ringing. Still, you can take your ease, unlike me. . . . Have I the right to refuse an accouchement that will bring me in forty sous for my children? You see, it would be better for Adeline that I were dead. Men are men, and he would find another wife. He is resigned to me, he waits, he suffers, and broods; but one day the alcohol will surprise him—he will take too much drink. Although he has become accustomed to it, little by little, to forget in the stupor of drink his solitude and worries, he is still a good man; he has been led astray.

The fault is mine; but it is too late now to remedy it, to return to my fireside and remain there. It is too late. Already, at the Économat de la Pitié, Adeline is in disgrace for his drinking habits, but the director is indulgent; he asked me to prevent him from coming drunk to the bureau, for the sake of the dignity of the administration. He may at any moment be discharged. Then I am riveted to my profession, as I will then be the only bread-winner of the family. If I could devote myself to him for one week, keep him in that gloomy back room and nurse him, I might save him yet. . . . And now, if my little Julien dies will he not be the second victim sacrificed to my profession? Is it not awful, terrible?"

She ceased speaking, a chill shook all her powerful frame. Her face was white with the anguish of mind that gave an expression of profound despair to her eyes, once so bright with gaiety and hope. Thérèse, who had listened to that sad confession with strange interest, took the poor woman in her arms and kissed her tenderly.

"My good Madame Adeline," she said soothingly, "do not lose all your courage. Julien is not in danger of death; the burns will leave a little stiffness in the muscles, I fear, but the register is not bad, the temperature does not mount up. After the bath I will give him an injection of morphine, then apply the dressing. I pray you, be consoled. You have managed your life with great dignity and merit; there is not a person who does not admire you."

"It would be better," answered the poor doctoress, "that they admired me less, and that I had made my married life happy."

The sound of angry voices in the *salle-à-manger* interrupted them. It was the servant, harshly reproving her master. A violent dispute arose that brought blushes

of shame to the cheeks of Madame Adeline: with a hasty excuse to Thérèse she left the room.

The young doctoress remained alone, anxious and sad over the quarrel that had so upset Madame Adeline. Her hand trembled as she wrote out the prescription. It awakened memories of her own child. He would have been two years old now. She tried to imagine what he would have been like, in his robe of big pleats, forming little baby phrases, and trotting in little steps all over the house. Her dead maternity was resuscitated by strange regrets, a sadness and vague need of something in her life. Her thoughts wandered to her husband, who had become so cold to her, so absent, so strange. That subtle abandon gave her a sudden pain, an agony of presentiment.

She signed the prescription with an effort:

Doctor Thérèse Gueméné.

Then she drew herself up wearily, despondently, as Lucie Adeline burst into the room. "The water is warm for my little brother's bath. After—you will give him the dressings while I watch you, may I? It is so nice, so soft, the medicated cotton. I wish to help you; will you permit me? Oh! the medicine, the medicine: if I only knew how to practise it!" She shivered with delight, then she became coaxing, wheedling, with the admiration of the young girl for her elders, the superior married women who are the incarnation of their ideals. She approached close to Thérèse, and put her head, with its abundant hair caught in a red ribbon, in a caressing gesture on her shoulder.

"Speak to Maman for me, will you, Madame? Oh, do, I pray you. She does not wish me to be a doctor. Then what shall I be? One day Monsieur Artout let me go to his class at the Beaujon. Oh! what happy moments

I passed there. Everything pleased me: the beds, the sick people, the doctors, the nurses. It was so white there, so clean, it smelt of drugs and medicine. Oh! I would have remained there for ever."

The trembling enthusiasm of the girl recalled her own youth to Thérèse. The emotion that the odour of iodoform gave her brought back the Hôtel-Dieu and the vestments of her father, the exterior of the great hospital, as seen from the passage and in the street, the view of the Geneva cross, emblem of her profession. All those bygone impressions returned to her as she listened to the rhapsodies of that little girl devoured by the same terrible and voluptuous fever of her vocation.

"I wish to be a doctor; I wish to sign the prescriptions as you do, one day, Doctor Lucie Adeline. I wish to cure the people, to become celebrated like Madame Lancelevée. If any one prevents me I shall kill myself."

Her eyes flashed through her tears. One could see how that young being was filled with a violent desire, and how she suffered already through that mysterious infatuation for the science of medicine. Thérèse was troubled and dismayed before the responsibility of encouraging her. Should she by a tacit acquiescence steer that young girl towards the perilous and fascinating career of medicine—she, who had learned now how that science takes possession of woman, enslaving her, exacting her entire submission, and absorbing her body and soul? This was the doubt that seized her, rendered her fearful and timorous for the moment to hazard a word of counsel that might perhaps for ever influence Lucie. She was no longer sure of the happiness of that career for women; an agonising uncertainty closed her lips.

"My little friend," she said finally, "I thank you for your confidence. You are very kind to have opened your

heart so frankly to me; but why ask my advice when you have your dear mother to give it to you? She has had a long practice in the profession that you wish to enter. She will guide you better than I can; she has bought her wisdom by experiences profound and cruel, believe me."

"But if you had a daughter," persisted Lucie, dissatisfied with words that meant so little, "you would not act as inconsiderately to her as mamma does to me."

"If I had a daughter," repeated Thérèse.

The whole history of her marriage passed through her mind—the quarrels, the sad hours, all the things she wished to forget, returned to her, subtly recalled by the words of Lucie. She relived the death of her baby, the misery of Fernand, the slow withering of their love. She recalled his cold kisses, his looks without tenderness, his forced smiles, their uninteresting talks, their nights without embraces.

And that certainty of no longer being loved by him gave her a physical contraction of the heart that was unsupportable in its pain.

"If you were my daughter, Lucie," she began, averting her pale face that the girl might not see her misery, "I would be very careful of giving you advice, very anxious over the choice of your vocation. Certainly, medicine is a magnificent career, but it is only for exceptional women. You are too young yet to decide. Listen to your mother. If you are unhappy, come some day to see me, my little friend."

The girl made a gesture of despair.

"No one understands me," she said.

Then, throwing off her sadness, she exclaimed energetically:

"Now, let us give Julien his bath."

When Thérèse left that miserable home her soul was wrung by a feeling of increased despondency. While she

was busy with her professional ministrations she forgot her own worries and the distress reigning in that house. She had bathed the little boy, opened the blisters, and enveloped his body completely in a blanket of white cotton-wool, where he rested more easily. Lucie was her only assistant, as the poor mother was quite incapable of rendering any help. The boy was still in danger, but she hoped to save him by her care. The feeling of satisfaction over her work did not last long ; the pleasure which the power of her skill always gave her disappeared when she was in the street. She forgot Julien, and thought no more of the painful confidences of the doctoress. Her thoughts returned to her own position.

" How easy it is for a wife to lose her husband," she mused, as her steps turned homewards. She was nervous and oppressed, and decided to walk instead of taking a cab. It was the dinner-hour, and a great throng filled the streets of that old part of Paris. A stream of carts, hand-carts and omnibuses, threaded with bicycles ringing their shrill bells or hooting horns, flowed along the cobbled roadway. Thérèse mingled with the crowd, heedless of the deafening noises, her thoughts busy with the problem of her married life.

" How good it was to be loved ! " was the burden of those thoughts.

When she turned out of the gloomy rue Dauphine and its turmoil into the quay, she had the sudden impression of great silence and light. The outlines of La Cité arose from the waters like the prow of a ship, tarrying beside the grey walls of the *quai des Orfèvres.* Presently the Hôtel-Dieu appeared, and Thérèse's heart was wrung by the memory of her engagement. It was there that Fernand had so passionately demanded her love, and that impossible sacrifice of her profession.

The symmetrical façade of Notre-Dame was transformed by the light of the setting sun into a rosy vision of towers, sculptures, of gargoyles, and colonnades surmounting the great rose window of the grand portal. Thérèse's gaze followed the flight of the swallows, their wings like sickles cut the air, turning and flashing in the evening light, while their metallic cries enhanced the illusion that they were birds of black steel.

"One day," mused Thérèse, "I crossed the Parvis with Fernand, and on the steps of the hospital I kissed him. We had come from a visit to Uncle Gueménè; he told us, as he looked at us arm-in-arm, 'My children, now you are married, remember this, you must live the same life.'"

Under the small arches of the Petit-Pont the Seine flowed like a slender ribbon of water encumbered by barges of merchandise, where the sailors lived in the moist hold, and were now drying their linen in the wind that blew across the hogsheads and through the joists and timbers. Thérèse saw all with absent gaze as she repeated thoughtfully:

"Live the same life!"

The slender Gothic nave of the cathedral, supported on the arched buttresses of ancient stone, lengthened its shadows towards the borders of the river, while under the apse the square of the archbishop bloomed with refreshing verdure. Thérèse asked herself, as her eyes wandered absently over that picturesque niche:

"Is it certain that Fernand does not love me? Is it possible for me still to cherish my love for him?"

The thought hastened her steps; she crossed the bridge and passed by the low, sinister building of the Morgue. The neighbourhood of that refuge of the unknown dead chilled the heart of that young woman, despite her familiarity with the dissecting amphitheatre, where she forgot

the sensitive delicacy of her sex. The people passing on the bridge of the Ile St.-Louis recognised her, and whispered to one another: "That is the doctoress of the *quai* Bourbon." When Thérèse saw her house in the shadow of the Italian poplars, the idea came to her that she would find Fernand waiting there for her. The thought made her heart beat with a delicious thrill. She felt that she would love him more than ever, that she would rewin him by her caresses.

"Is Monsieur at table?" she asked the servant, who opened the door.

"Monsieur has not yet returned, Madame," was the answer to her dream of reconciliation.

. . . . .

The daily visits to Madame Jourdeaux had become an imperious habit with Gueméné. He awaited each day with secret feverishness the hour of that visit, burning with impatience over the medical matters that might defer that happy occasion. When he arrived, eager for new joy, anxious, passionate, he found that gentle friend busy with her embroidery in the familiar window seat, serene and tranquil outwardly, but inwardly devoured by an unconscious disquietude. She was very pale and sad; she was no longer soothed by that tender exchange of friendship, no longer deceived by its gracious freedom. While they talked restrainedly, the eyes fixed on the clock that limited the time of that hasty interview, they kept guard over their words, their attitudes, restraining the natural, easy exchange of intimacy as formerly. All this through the mutual understanding of one another that had so subtly drawn them together. Each made the same effort to retain by a thousand artifices that illusive wall of friendship between them, to safeguard them from

the violent sentiment uniting their secret thoughts. When that frail ivory tower would fall they would behold the naked truth of their passion in its real aspect.

The time passed; Gueméné felt he must leave that inaccessible friend, who calmed him by her Madonna-like air and the wasted features worn through secret and proud melancholy. He would leave her with his heart torn by misery, only to return each time more infatuated, more hungry for her sympathy, burning with desires he dare not express.

That evening he was in a state of over-excitement, irritated, vaguely discontented with himself, unsatiated.

"What is the matter? What troubles you, my friend?" she asked tenderly.

She pressed his hand with more than her accustomed warmth, but discreetly withdrew and resumed her embroidery.

"Oh," he replied, "it is nothing more than usual."

"You are still unhappy at home?"

That gentle, tender-hearted woman nourished but one bad sentiment, and that was her hatred for Thérèse. She thought of her with anger, seeing in her only what was detestable and wicked. She invented a thousand faults by which to judge her.

"No," answered he. "My wife has done nothing new to pain me. Thérèse has, I assure you, very beautiful qualities—that I acknowledge. She is good, and firm in what she considers her duty. She looks upon marriage from a selfish and parsimonious standpoint, but she has never failed in doing what she deemed right. And it is that which makes the tragedy of my position. My life beside her is one long succession of little miseries. She has never given me cause for the great anger that would deliver me, set me free, and I still feel the obligation to

bear myself affectionately towards her. But kisses cannot restore our ruined happiness."

Madame Jourdeaux straightened herself slowly. The embroidery rested on her lap as those nimble fingers ceased to work; her eyelids trembled as she said in a voice she strove to render indifferent:

"You still love her, my poor friend."

Gueméné was moved by a scruple that prevented his giving voice to the brutal acknowledgment, "I do not love my wife." That would be, he felt, too great an injury to the dignity of Thérèse—a treachery that she did not merit. He tried to avoid answering by giving an explanation.

"After that which has been between us for so long," he said, choosing his words carefully, "there remains an indelible relationship, an atmosphere of remembrances that may be also cold and mournful as the grave, but which we share in common. That is the worst of the situation. The phantom of our former love remains to deceive us. We embrace, we smile, we exchange thoughts, and use the old terms of endearment, blindly satisfied with the shadow of what was once real; and, as nothing is wrong to outward appearances, we must be content to live like that—a life sad as death itself."

"Tell me," she asked, in slightly altered tones, "have you not reproached her for making you suffer these cruel things?"

"Perhaps."

"How inconsistent you are!"

"No, I am logical. If she had been completely at fault I would have separated from her without remorse, I would have made my nest—elsewhere."

He was silent. She caught her needle and jerked it feverishly through the embroidery. They were both

deeply moved, their eyes shone, their souls trembled with the same suppressed desire to be united. Some moments passed in silence, then Gueméné said with an effort:

"What a splendid day it has been."

"Yes," she answered, raising her eyes to the square of blue sky framed in the high wall of the enclosed court. He saw the tears in those beautiful eyes.

"How stupid I am," he cried. "I come here to bring a little joy into your life so sad and lonely, and I only make you suffer by the sight of my misery."

She was vexed by that avowal; she had always imagined in her devotion to him that he came in quest of happiness, and not to give it.

"Yes, you have been very good; you have made me visits in your charity, but all my friendship cannot make you forget the one who has been so hard to you, and whom you have cherished so much—whom, perhaps, you cherish still, without knowing it."

She could speak no more—a sob choked her. Never before had this gentle, sweet woman let him see how much she suffered in secret. Gueméné in that moment read her true mind.

"My friend, my friend, how can you speak so?" he said calmly, to reassure her. "You have done me much good; on the contrary, it is you who have made the only sweetness in my lost life."

"Is that true?"

Their eyes met, their faces flushed, while a subtle fear arose between them. The door opened to admit the little André. He had finished his lessons, and wished to show them to the doctor. The presence of the child did not irritate or derange Gueméné: he represented for him that other love which had been snatched from him. It satisfied his paternal desires to occupy his time with the

little son of his friend, to supervise his studies and direct his life. He had recommended a German teacher for the boy. Unconsciously he loved to be an authority in that house, which was to him an imaginary home, where he governed the child, and lorded over the mother.

He examined the pages of the copy-book, while the child listened docilely to his observations.

"When you have studied better," he said, "I will take you to my laboratory and show you all sorts of little animals."

"Will there be lizards?" cried the child in his shrill soprano voice.

Gueméné laughed and took him on his knee, and, folding him in his arms, pressed him close to his breast. The mother, busy with her embroidery, glanced at them out of the corner of her eye. All three were silent, enjoying the sweetness of that companionship and comfort that gave Gueméné a feeling of home, until he fancied at times it was really his own.

"Your cooking smells good," he said suddenly, in a plaintive voice. "Invite me to dinner."

Madame Jourdeaux trembled as she looked up from her work.

"You wish to dine here?"

It was the first time he had expressed that wish. Kindly as she always received him, she did not dare to press him to remain beyond the time of his usual visit—she feared to overstep the line that marked the limit of her delicacy and reserve; but at his request she did not try to hide her pleasure, and rang the bell for the servant to order another place to be prepared at the table. The little André slipped from his knee and cried in childish anxiety:

"You are not afraid of keeping Madame Gueméné waiting too long for you this evening?"

"I have often waited for her," he answered with a touch of annoyance. Then he continued, a trifle sadly:

"I have invented many stories in order to dine at a restaurant between two urgent sick calls—lied with words. Is it worse than lying with kisses?"

"Poor friend," said Madame Jourdeaux tenderly.

She resumed her work in silence while Gueméné remained thoughtful.

When they passed into the *salle-à-manger*, the little boy approached Gueméné, and slyly glided a roll of paper into the pocket of his big friend. It was a surprise that he had been preparing for three days: a beautiful copy written with great care, ornamented with a dedication, and tied with a red ribbon. The boy trembled with the excitement of his act. All through the evening his eyes were riveted on the pocket where his big friend might put his hand at any moment and discover his prize. The boy awaited breathlessly the surprise in store for him; but his hopes were vain, as the doctor did not put his hand in that particular pocket during the whole time of the dinner.

The dinner was delightful, reigned over by that charming woman. The presence of the servant who served prevented any appearance of intimacy. Gueméné discussed his experiences of the laboratory; he told of the interest of Boussard, who asked him to give a long account of his discovery, to be presented to the Academy, but he was restrained from writing the article through his scruples—his conscience demanded new observations to satisfy him that he was on the right road. He was now experimenting on dogs; he would be glad to find some very large dogs to increase the power of the virus.

"Ah!" he said despondently, "the field of experiments is like a mirage, the more one strives to reach it the farther away it seems."

Madame Jourdeaux was carefully cutting slices of fruit-cake; without ceasing, she answered:

"I have offered you a field, but you will not accept. It is always at your disposition: that experiment will decide your discovery."

He made a sound between a laugh and a sob.

"You! you!" he stammered. "I would be committing a crime, and you would be my victim."

The knife fell from her hand as she listened. There was a tone of passion in Fernand's voice: she felt the unspoken words of idolatry that he would have timidly declared, and she breathlessly awaited the inevitable avowal; but the danger passed: they only smiled into each other's eyes—the tranquil smile of two noble beings perfectly sure of each other. After the dessert he took his leave of her; the brief moments of happiness died in the regret that their lives again separated, he to the cold, unsympathetic home awaiting him, she to the loneliness of her widowed fireside.

Gueméné always dreaded the return to his home, and the presence of Thérèse, whom he invariably found smiling tranquilly, kindly, and attractive by the very force of her self-possession. Still, it was always a relief for him to find her absent. He was secretly embarrassed before her clear, direct gaze, as though the loyal soul of Thérèse read the estrangement in his heart.

That evening he hoped to find her at work in her cabinet, where he would greet her with a brief kiss. But she was awaiting him in their chamber. He found this strange, and, observing the traces of tears on her face, turned to leave the room, and go to work in his cabinet on the floor below. She detained him, saying:

"Fernand, remain here a few moments, I pray you."

"What is it you wish, my darling?"

The term of endearment consoled her, likewise his manner,

which appeared more affectionate than usual. Had she not alarmed herself needlessly? She had dreamed of a scene between them, a definite explanation of his indifference, an appeal to his love that would decide their future, but suddenly it seemed too theatrical, and also unnecessary. She contented herself with saying:

"Why did you not return for dinner?"

"I did not come," he replied with forced assurance, "because it was impossible. . . . I was on the left side of the river—and—would have been too late—so—I dined at a *brasserie*."

"Oh! I do not wish to reproach you, dear," she said with infinite sadness. "I have not the right to do so."

He was astonished to hear such an admission from those proud lips. He regarded her fixedly, seeking to find the meaning behind those words.

"I deserve it," she continued, "for the many disappointments I have given you when you needed me."

She did not add how the evening had passed for her, weeping in her chamber over the happy days of their love, of her regrets for those vanished joys. Gueméné was struck by that new aspect of her humility. It seemed that a light illumined for one brief instant the real heart of Thérèse; that light revealed to him his own shortcomings, his errors, his selfishness in taking that virgin intellect, that sublime soul into his keeping, to have raised in that soul, with its ignorance of love, new desires, passionate needs that he had not satisfied. The goodness in her moved him to pity for her, a light, superficial regret seized him for the wife he had so insidiously abandoned. He thrilled with the desire for that other woman; he pitied his wife as he would have pitied any stranger whom he saw suffering; he already felt the accommodating conscience, the self-duplicity of the unfaithful husband.

"My poor darling," he murmured as he embraced her, "our lives have been ordered so; the bonds were made to be broken."

She made a passionate gesture as though she would clasp him to her, hold him prisoner, even while she felt him recoil. A great sadness rendered her helpless. He was touched by her suffering.

"After all," he said, more to exonerate himself than through any feeling of remorse, "you have your profession to console you. . . ."

Then he set about disrobing: he emptied the pocket of his trousers of the thermometer and the visiting card-case. A roll of paper bound by red ribbon fell at his feet.

"Well, what have we here?" he exclaimed.

Thérèse, moved by a mechanical act of politeness, picked up the paper, and untied the red ribbon. The copy of little André was revealed to her unsuspecting gaze.

"Have you been with Madame Jourdeaux this evening?" she asked him.

"No! no! I was on the left side of the river."

"Then, will you read this?"

At the bottom of the page in letters of fully half an inch Gueméné read:

"*Clovis seized his battle-axe and struck the soldier dead at his feet, as he cried—Remember the Soissons vase!*"

and below the words:

"*To my great friend Monsieur Gueméné.*

"ANDRÉ JOURDEAUX."

Gueméné was annoyed, and reread the paper.

"Oh! now I remember. It was last week; I was called to see the little fellow as he was slightly indisposed. He wished to give me his lesson. I have kept it in my pocket since that day."

"But," said Thérèse in a strange voice, "the copy is dated to-day."

Then Gueméné saw the finger of his wife point to the words:

"*Wednesday, May ninth.*"

She turned her beautiful eyes upon him with a questioning look. He found the penetrating gaze of those clear, truthful eyes unsupportable. She did not understand, only that a falsehood had been offered her by the one in whom she had blind faith and confidence.

"Oh, well!—yes!" he acknowledged boldly, "I let them keep me to dinner this evening at Madame Jourdeaux's. I was very tired, and the smell of the cooking gave me an appetite. And to not pain you, I told you a lie. I would have made you believe that necessity kept me away from you. Forgive my fault, and, above all, that cowardly lie; it is the first one I have told you. . . ."

The eyes of Thérèse darkened; her face grew pale; she made no observation, not knowing what to think. She felt giddy from the shock of that strange revelation.

. . . .

That night, as they slept side by side, there was a dumb hostility in their souls, that separated them as though by an invisible wall.

II

THÉRÈSE knew then the sorrowful hours and anxious life of those wives who are deceived. Without knowing more, she desired for many reasons the truth. Fernand had kept his visits to Madame Jourdeaux a secret; sooner than acknowledge them he had lied. Then, with the sharpness of suspicion, she recalled all her acquaintance with Madame Jourdeaux. Since the time when they first met that young woman at the dinner of Dr. Herlinge, Fernand had never ceased to speak of her in terms of admiration. To-day there was no possible doubt of the ascendency she had gained over him. The year before he had ordered her to pass the summer in the moutains, for the boy's sake, at the same hotel where Thérèse and he were stopping. The stay of Madame Jourdeaux at that hotel had not been an accident—Fernand had brought the widow there. Thérèse recalled, then, the fact that he nad furnished all the particulars of the establishment. Did he not love her then ? The thought of being deceived for a long time overwhelmed Thérèse; she suffered, above all, in the loss of her esteem for Fernand. In the fullness of her confidence she believed him to possess a soul as pure as her own, but he had deceived her in secret. That duplicity in one that she loved wounded her cruelly. The spirit of jealousy was slow to take hold on her proud soul. But when that pride revealed to her how little Fernand valued or understood her, when he abandoned her for a

woman like Madame Jourdeaux, she endured less noble suffering, she was plunged into a profound and terrible state of humiliation and outraged honour.

She fancied all sorts of unworthy espionage. In her anger she could have trapped them, and her vengeance would be their guilty confusion. She did not live over those schemes of revenge like other women do during their long idle hours, but pressed, harassed from morning until night by her masculine work, carried her torture with her, suffering incessantly when driving, walking, or with her clients; she could not shake off that cruel aching of her heart when beside the bedsides of her patients. Sometimes the pain was increased, accentuated by the evidences of love between the young married people that she attended: the young wife so tenderly watched by her husband, the sighs, the kisses, the embraces tried her beyond endurance. That wonderful doctoress, so superior and incomprehensible, on whose slightest word the invalids hung with eager respect, and whose slightest gesture was watched in fear and hope, found herself feeble, envious, suffering in secret, and scarcely able to retain her tears.

She tended the little Adeline with extraordinary zeal, calling twice a day in the rue Buci to administer the dressings, the baths, and morphine. The slight haughtiness that she had formerly shown towards Jeanne Adeline, so trivial in her vulgar popularity of midwife, had vanished in the cloud of their mutual domestic unhappiness. She made it a compensation for all she had endured to restore the child of that mother.

But when she returned to her home and found herself face to face with that disloyal companion, who hid in his heart a mystery, the grief of Thérèse assumed another form of rancour and anger against her husband that was unbearable in its agony.

A week passed, and in the obscurity of the silence that reigned between them she was infuriated by new suspicions ; but her delicate pride was repugnant to reproaches, to angry scenes. The superiority of those two beings made their mute quarrel more painful and tragic than any violent explanations would have done. Often when at table Fernand felt the scrutinising regard of his wife. She was in her mournful resentment so noble and pathetic, that he felt himself belittled, humiliated. That reserve was Thérèse's power ; it made him play an inferior rôle in that silent drama.

He was discontented and disgusted with himself and with that life founded on equivocation, wherein he could not justify himself. When he returned to Madame Jourdeaux he found another equivocal situation. Of what use the reserve of his friend when he was deprived of happiness near his wife ? He felt now as though a veil had been thrown over that tender, passionate friendship, to which both had been dedicated, and he suffered less from his scruples as a husband than from the need of the loving companionship to which he had been accustomed. He knew well that any act of unfaithfulness to his wife would terrify her, and yet he was not content with her half-hearted generosity. She, also, on her part, was unconsciously vexed at the ambiguous situation in which she found herself. They now manifested an unreasonable sensitiveness towards each other. She would reproach him for his sadness that she did not know how to console ; while he complained of the little pleasure she seemed to take in his society. Their words were as tender as formerly, but under them many sad and bitter things were concealed.

One day, when worn out with listening to the subtle griefs that he never ceased to enumerate to her, she exclaimed :

"One would think that you took pleasure in making me suffer."

"And you?" he murmured reproachfully.

She was terrified at the suggestion conveyed in the face of her friend.

"What! I make you suffer?" she stammered. "I—but how? how?"

"Ah, you do not know—you will not see."

He buried his head in his hands, a tear fell on his knee. The sight of his tears completely overcame her. The sorrow of her friend was unbearable. She was vanquished by her tender heart. Approaching him softly, she bowed over him and pressed a gentle kiss on his forehead.

It was the first kiss that he had received from her; his eyes closed, he wished to embrace her.

"Oh, my friend, my friend," he whispered, filled with nameless sweetness as he raised his arms towards her; but she was already away from him, pale and trembling with terror over what she had done. He was plunged into happiness, absolutely content, through that first sign of love from the woman who had nourished and consoled him; he looked at her with an indescribable tenderness.

"Oh, my friend, how good you are. Thanks!"

"But," she replied, "I only wished to comfort you a little, to make your life less lonely and unhappy."

The interviews that followed became more difficult. Madame Jourdeaux was more reserved and cold than ever. She kept the little André with her during the visits of the doctor. Gueméné began to resent her coldness and judge her harshly. Their overstrung nerves continued to exasperate him more each day.

It was at this moment that Thérèse decided to have an explanation with her husband.

One evening, after their repast, Fernand was leaning on

his elbow by the window as he smoked; she joined him, but without speaking. The night had not yet come. In the trees the pigeons were still cooing, the ferry-boats glided silently over the waves of the river. The quiet was broken only by the sound of the water stirred by the motion of the screw, as now and then a boat stopped at the little bridge-house to disembark the passengers. At last Thérèse spoke.

"Fernand, we must have an understanding."

"We must have an understanding?" he repeated nervously.

"You know, Fernand, that our happiness has always depended on our perfect frankness with each other. And our unhappiness will be less for throwing a light upon it. Have courage, my friend; let us talk honestly with each other."

She trembled, her voice shook. In her outraged pride she had decided, if Fernand declared his infidelity, to remain no longer in the home where she had ceased to be the loved and religiously honoured wife. She had resolved to separate, to efface herself, to give her unfaithful companion the liberty of his infidelity. Her indignation forced her to take this step—she would not speak of her grief, that was breaking her heart and destroying her love.

"I know that you no longer love me," she continued.

"My poor Thérèse! My poor love!"

"Make no protestations. Your eyes, your acts, your soul, which I have learned to read, are more sincere than your words. Oh, do not fear, my dear. I am not going to make a scene. We are strong enough to look the truth in the face. I come to reason with you about our misery. I will not afflict you—you will not find me a drag upon you. We can be very good friends, independent of our love,

capable of helping one another without animosity, without hate. We have loved each other too well to hate each other now."

She touched him deeply by the sight of her agitation under that assumed calmness. He felt that she loved him in her grief more, perhaps, than ever. He could not but admire her noble character, her beauty, but he no longer vibrated to her charm; he felt only pity for that woman who in her pride had worn out his love.

"Hate each other? my poor Thérèse," he said in the gentle tone that one addresses to the afflicted. "What are you thinking of? You are always my love, my dear wife. I know what you wish; I have not forgotten, but have I ever been hard or unjust to you? Have I ever made you suffer?"

"Fernand," she responded gravely, "do not bandy words, I implore you. I have the right to ask this. If I have not been the companion that you have expected, I have been, none the less, neither wicked nor unworthy. Let us strip our souls, speak in absolute sincerity. I have the courage to hear all. *You love another woman.*"

Gueméné felt that henceforth it was impossible to deceive Thérèse. He let his silence speak what he had not the courage to avow. Thérèse pressed her hands on the window-sill; she closed her eyes for a few seconds; his silence revealed nothing that she did not already know, but it confirmed all her sad deductions. She was prostrate for the moment by that sudden revelation. Gueméné heard her murmur:

"Thanks, for not lying to me."

Then he felt a reaction; the old habit to dominate her returned; he feared now to lose his wife, who he believed wished to leave him.

"Thérèse, I swear to you—you must listen to me, you

must believe me—I swear to you, from the day I began to love you, to this very moment, I have never wished for any other woman than you. You have been my only companion; I am as true to you as I was during the first days of our union."

She turned her distracted eyes to his in a look that sought to probe his soul as she murmured passionately:

"Then . . . then. Why? I don't understand. Oh, I wish to believe you—it seems to me that you are sincere. I am forced to accept what you tell me. I do not fear it, Fernand; I know you too well. You have been too completely mine for me not to see through you. I now see in you something that you still hide from me."

Night had come; they appeared to be two shadows lost in the darkness, but Fernand could still trace by the faint light the expressions of hope and sadness that swept over the face of his wife.

"I have told you the truth," he repeated, stung by her words. "You are free to imagine what you wish."

"Look me straight in the face, Fernand; let me read your eyes. Show me your true self as I have shown you mine. I disguise nothing of my heart; I came to you this evening in anger and uncertainty, to propose a separation. I am not the woman to share you with any one, and I wished to leave you if I am a burden, a clog to you. My dignity, my pride, my wishes count for nothing now; I wish to be reconciled with you. I have nothing left but my love for you. I am more tenderly attached to you than ever before. Nothing can take me from you. No, no; I do not wish to part with you, to give you up, to lose you. You are my beloved husband until death. You fear to offend me, to betray, to make me drink the cup of sorrow. But I possess the eternal fidelity of true love that is not abased by resignation, that is not disgraced by humility,

that is not reduced by pardon. Without doubt, you are astonished to hear me express these sentiments, to know that I have renounced all pride, extinguished all anger. But if I spoke otherwise, Fernand, I would be guilty of telling a lie; and we cannot both be hypocrites."

"My Thérèse!"

"Yes, I am *your* Thérèse; but you are no more *my* Fernand. You love another woman, and I have discovered who that woman is. She is Madame Jourdeaux."

"Madame Jourdeaux is nothing more than a friend, in the true sense of the word. You demand the truth, there it is; I say it without swearing, without formula. Do you believe me?"

"Yes, Fernand, I believe you; but I am not a child to be contented with appearances only. I know the human soul, and I know how to think. Madame Jourdeaux is a simple but loyal woman, and an illicit love would terrify her; she would not accept it. Your friend—your friend. Would you wish me to have a friend that was not also your friend, in the pure sense of the word? Tell me."

Her whole sense of wifehood was up in arms, burning with revolt that left her breathless, without tears or sighs. She suffered more than an ordinary woman, by reason of her superiority.

Then, fearing that Fernand might burst into reproaches, recall the past, the little care she took of her home, she hastened to speak.

"You have gone outside your home to find a friend—a woman has entered your life, taken possession of your heart. We women, we distinguish less than men the difference between the adultery of the heart and that of the body. This is the meaning of your friendship for Madame Jourdeaux. I try to ignore, but I foresee it; it is the snare, the lure of friendship that ends in passion,

and worse. Fernand, I cannot hide it; the very thought suffices to wound me. You do not know how I suffer—never have I been so unhappy."

She left the window. He arose and followed her into the shadows of the room, where they sat down, each buried in their thoughts, each quietly weeping. Presently Thérèse began to speak.

"You were not the only one in fault; I was at fault also. You came to announce the wreck of your love, I heard you again supplicate me to abandon my profession. Without doubt you were already weary of me; I had lost my power over you. Your prayer moved me, you seemed to suffer. You disturbed my peace of mind that day, upset my life; but I could not do what you wished. Are you revenged? Tell me, Fernand."

"No."

He answered, but he thought—she comes to me now, because she thinks I will escape her; but it is too late. Then he was seized by the memory of all the misery of his married life, the ruin of his dreams, all that he had endured in that room: his solitary meals, that home whose guardian was always on the wing.

"I have suffered much for you," he cried aloud.

"My friend," answered Thérèse sadly, "I understand now your suffering, for I suffer myself. But until now I have never experienced suffering. I was ignorant of your sorrow. Will you forgive me?"

"My poor Thérèse, I have nothing to forgive. Better still, notwithstanding this trouble, the crisis that I undergo, where I no longer see myself clearly, I feel in my whole being that I love you more than anything in the world."

She understood the impossibility of that frank avowal on the spur of the moment. He sought to bribe her by

a semblance of truth and affection. He would not inflict the keen pain of his honest avowal upon her. He could not say, "I love you no more." It was only a sort of shadowy consent between them, that veiled them from each other and would enable them to continue to live together. The darkness of the room where they sat, their indifference to the need of a lamp, was an emblem of their future; henceforth doubt and uncertainty would exist between them. Thérèse forgot the refinements of her sincerity; she was bound by that equivocal passion of Fernand, which was the only thing that permitted them to continue living together.

They spoke no more during that sombre *tête-à-tête*; they were worn out with that struggle, broken, and dejected. Thérèse acknowledged at the first:

"I am very weary, my dear!"

"You must come to bed, my darling!"

She was touched anew by that affectionate tone, almost brotherly, in which he spoke.

They ascended the stairs together, slowly, languid with the indescribable sadness of their lost happiness. When they reached their chamber Fernand opened the door, but Thérèse drew back.

"Enter," he said absently.

"Listen, Fernand," she said, while all colour fled from her face, and her eyes were suffused with a mist of tears. "You know that I have forgiven all, and that I love you, but, after what has passed between us to-night, I must conquer the pride that I feel rising within me. I will submit to you in everything, my dear, but permit me, I beg you, permit me to pass this night alone."

Without a word, he made a gesture of sadness and resignation, and passed into the adjoining room.

. . . . .

The following day, in the beginning of the afternoon, the servant of Uncle Gueméné admitted Thérèse to the salon of the dead woman whose portrait hung on the walls opposite the great bay windows. The beautiful eyes of the picture seemed to revel in the verdure of the gardens of the Luxembourg before the open windows.

The great room was like a shrine, wherein the mute piano, the unfinished embroidery, the easy-chair, the faded carpet with the imprint of two slippers were guarded in religious silence. Thérèse thought of that day she came with Fernand during their honeymoon. She remembered how happy they were in that love they dreamed would last for ever. The portrait looked down upon them; they gazed reverently on that ideal figure of imperishable passion. Thérèse had envied that mysterious woman her power, her indefinable charm, the marvellous romance of love that had been hers. She had said to herself, "I wish to be loved as that woman was loved. I wish to feel the sweetness of that sovereign power." It was true that with the caressing eyes of Fernand upon her, the thought of all the voluptuous joys she had given him reflected there; she felt her power was equal to that superb *tantine*. But that romance of the mystic, beautiful dead had endured many years, and outlived the darkness of death, and what had become of hers?

The door opened to admit the old man. "My dear Thérèse, how kind of you to come to see me. How is Fernand?"

In her distress she came to him for refuge, knowing his goodness, his delicacy, and the magnificent experience of his heart. Uncle Gueméné was fond of Fernand. She felt for him a special regard, childlike and sweet. She looked at him with respect, with piety, as a living relic of a great past, the weary actor in a beautiful drama;

and as she raised to his those eyes, heavy with sadness, he cried "Nothing has happened to distress you—nothing very bad?"

She answered very low:

"Yes; a great misfortune—the end of all our joy, all our dream."

She clasped his dry, bony hand in hers, and pressed it nervously, as though he were all-powerful to help, to save her. Then, with eyes closed, she turned away her face as she said brokenly:

"Listen to me. I will tell you all."

Never until that moment had she been so interesting to him, a young, charming woman, doctor like himself, and leading through her intellect a life similar to his own, also impenetrable and mysterious, yet secretly feeble and impressionable as the most natural and simple of her sex. This unexpected avowal moved him deeply. He had not seen without anxiety the union of Fernand with this exceptionally gifted young girl. He had been too absorbed in his own sorrow to exercise his prerogative as Fernand's relative, and warn him; but he watched the young couple with constant anxiety; still, he had not foreseen the catastrophe that Thérèse revealed with broken phrases between her tears.

For some time she had the feeling that Fernand was estranged from her. It had come insensibly, without shocks, without scenes. He was always kind and affectionate as in the past, but he spoke little, and his heart strayed from her gradually, without a hint of his secret coldness. She had not the slightest suspicion. She had so much confidence naturally, so little distrust, that she suffered without reproaching him. And then, the other evening a proof fell into her hands that made her see clearly. A roll of paper dropped from Fernand's pocket,

where it had been slipped by the little son of one of his patients, which gave her undeniable proof of the intimacy of her husband with the young woman. To vindicate himself he had lied to her. The falsehood which she discovered that day revealed to her the clandestine visits that he would not confess. The idea that he loved another woman had caused her a week of the most atrocious worry. Never had she believed that a human soul could endure such torments, never had she imagined the terrible pangs of jealousy. She almost died of those fierce paroxysms of anger, and the prudent restraint she had put upon herself. Gradually the thought came to her of a separation with Fernand. Her dignity demanded such a step, and alas! her vengeance. But yesterday they had an explanation, and their hearts were changed for the better on that reconciliation, and, wonderful to say, she loved him more than ever through her suffering. She found that life without him would be insupportable. She felt an indulgence for the weakness of her husband that she was unable to comprehend. Fernand had declared that the young woman was not his mistress, but, alas! the delicacy of his sentiment for her was not reassuring. That proof of an attachment so spiritual was more dangerous than a mere physical passion. Thérèse suffered more cruelly still through it. All that was most precious and beautiful in the soul of Fernand had been given to that woman. But she had still the hope of regaining her husband's love; and for that reason she had come to consult the man whom her husband looked upon in the light of a kind and loving father. She came to beg him to advise her, to help her. He had known a love not given to all—a love so spiritual, so great, so rare that it had even survived death. She implored him to guide her, to aid her to regain the love of Fernand. Ah! she

sighed in conclusion, "would that I were like the beautiful *tantine*."

Uncle Gueméné shook his head sadly. "What misery you cause me, Thérèse. Ah! my poor children, my poor children." She drew her chair near him as she continued to speak.

"Dear uncle, I am no longer proud. I am no longer vain of my personality. Vain, why should I be? I am a poor, abandoned woman, who could not keep the love of such a good husband as Fernand. I have been subjected to the worst injury a woman can receive, despite my great intellect, my fame, my work. Ah! I am at last crushed into submission. I think only of my lost happiness. Tell me what to do. I am ready to follow the first word of advice from your superior will. I am docile as a child."

"My dear Thérèse," he replied in a voice full of emotion, "let me give you a word of hope. It is not possible that Fernand should cease to love a woman such as you are." She vanquished the last qualms of self-love as she acknowledged her share in the domestic crisis. "Ah! you must know all. I have not made him happy. When he married me, I resolved to live an independent life, to follow my intellectual career. He implored me to be all in all to him, and I refused. I reserved, in my vanity, my right to become a celebrated woman in my profession. Tell me, has he ever complained of me to you?"

"Never, Thérèse. It is through him that I learned to appreciate you. When he spoke of you it was always in tones that vibrated with the force of his love."

"He has suffered much through me, nevertheless. He has told me so. I was not the wife of his dreams. We have not joined our lives. Before I became his wife I

was a doctoress. He has sought for a love that he has not found in me, a devoted wife, that I have not been. But, if now, through my love for him, I become an ordinary woman, I renounce the practice of medicine, do you believe that sacrifice will restore him to me?"

He looked at her in surprise; he was moved by that simple explanation, that abdication, that overthrow of her ambition, that sacrifice of her individuality. He was himself a doctor, and he knew the powerful fascination that profession exercised over its followers; and, above all, he knew the passionate devotion of that young woman for her science.

"I believe," he said, in decided tones, "if he does not return to an admirable wife like you, he is neither worthy of your love nor your esteem."

"Oh! I am not an admirable wife," she said. "I imitate the aeronaut, who, when he feels himself sinking, casts forth some of his treasure to lighten the balloon and send it floating into the blue. . . . No one thinks to admire his sacrifice. If before the danger he had cast the treasure to those who begged for it, he would have been doing a sublime act. I am doing nothing sublime in sacrificing my profession to Fernand. For four years I have refused him; perhaps it is now too late."

She spoke with all the solemnity of one who vows to end their career.

"When I leave you, I shall go to the printer and order the circulars to send to my patients, announcing the close of my practice of medicine."

The widower rose and, going to her, caught her hands in his.

"My dear Thérèse," he said with emotion, "thanks for Fernand. He can never be sufficiently grateful to you. . . ."

His voice broke; he could say no more. He saw, as though a bright light had suddenly illumined her unknown soul, the real Thérèse, whom he had had the hardihood to misjudge, the denseness to misunderstand, and whom he now understood for the first time—that modern woman, whose intellectual development and culture had not abolished the infinite resources of her true woman's heart. She was so simple in her renouncement, so firm in her declaration, as though that which she determined on doing was a small matter, and not the sacrifice of her life-work. He could not resist saying:

"But your career began so beautifully. Will you not regret it?"

"Ah!" answered Thérèse, "what is that career in comparison to the love of Fernand?"

The face of the dead seemed to smile on her from its frame of pale gold. Between the two women, the beautiful *tantine*, with her glowing eyes under the old-fashioned *coiffure*, the delicate hands gracefully clasped, and the proud young doctoress—between that soft shadow of the dead and the radiant presence of the living, an invisible link seemed to stretch forth and bind them in the same bonds of faithful, unselfish love, in the same noble servitude of absolute devotion.

The widower saw the gaze of Thérèse rest in loving reverence on that beloved portrait, and in the solemn joy of that moment, wherein he recognised the greatness of that living love, he paid her the first tribute to the glory of her sacrifice.

"My dearest Thérèse, you are worthy to be loved as your beautiful *tantine* was loved."

III

THÉRÈSE experienced during this period a great moral disorder. The superabundance of her energy revolted against a useless life. That day, the days following, she had many indispensable visits to make in her practice: certain of her patients could not safely be neglected, certain treatments could not possibly be interrupted. To her other clients she wrote of her determination. Her servants were instructed to refuse all patients admission, giving as a pretext the state of her health. Fernand alone was unconscious of this new state of affairs—he saw nothing unusual. She anticipated a favourable moment to inform him of the sacrifice she was making for his love. But Fernand appeared sad, strange, absent-minded; he seemed to live in a sort of dream. She watched him ceaselessly, all her efforts concentrated on divining what was passing in his soul. "Of whom was he thinking in those long silences?" "What name was behind that unreadable forehead, whose image in the depths of those eyes that avoided her?" "Where had he been when he returned each evening, languid and sad, preoccupied, giving her a mechanical embrace that was cruel in its indifference. Where had he been?" . . . And she also was silent always, her days filled with little moments of idleness or occupied in preparations for the issuing of her circulars.

When she was with the printers, and scented the odour

of fresh ink, saw the little leaves in hundreds ready for revising that would render her decision public and irrevocable, she had a start like that of awaking from a long sleep.

"*Dr. Thérèse Gueméné has the honour to inform M—— that, for reasons of her health, she is giving up the practice of medicine. She prays M—— to kindly accept her regrets,*" etc.

"What have I done?" she murmured. "Can it be true?"

Then the thought that Fernand would be touched, would finally understand her love, and weep over the treason of which he had been guilty, gave her a great outburst of passion, a joy that restored all her courage.

That same day Thérèse made a visit to her last patient. It was a young woman afflicted with a disease that left scarcely any hope of recovery. She confided all her troubles—the brutality of her husband, whom she loved despite all—to the woman-doctor, whom she looked upon more in the light of a sacred minister to whom she must avow all, than a friend. When she heard of the retirement of Thérèse a heart-rending scene passed at that bedside: the sick woman wrung her hands, weeping bitterly, excited herself dangerously, as she cried in piteous tones:

"But you cannot abandon me! I need you; I will not have a man to treat me. You are the only one to whom I can tell all."

Thérèse promised to come sometimes to see her, as a friend. But as she left that house, upset by the spectacle of the poor woman's grief, insidiously, like a last supreme ruse to retain her, the power of that profession of medicine again swayed her, seduced her under the guise of a mission, a work henceforth given for charity alone. She sought to palliate her remorse for abandoning that noble career by

this resolution; for was she not unfaithful to her duty? The woman-doctor beside the bedside of the woman-patient, was not that a great and precious rôle? She recalled all the confidences that wives had given her, all the counsels that she had given them. Was she right to desert the profession that afforded her such opportunities for doing good to her sex?

But that evening when she found Fernand more gloomy, more cold, more detached from her than ever, her despair was so keen that she evaded all desire for that mission and its duties in her sad rôle of the woman who feels she has lost her husband.

During this time a certain timidity prevented her from revealing her project to Fernand. Another reason was that she saw so little of him. His laboratory, he said, absorbed him continually. After dinner he went out for the rest of the evening. Their nights were passed apart from each other. On the table in her cabinet the bundle of circulars still lay, waiting to be sent away, but as Fernand no longer entered the room he did not see them.

"I will dispatch them all to-morrow," said Thérèse at length.

Before doing this, however, she decided to see her father; and as she dreaded the visit to the house in the avenue Victor-Hugo, for the explanations due her family, the questions, the deductions, the comment sure to follow on her avowal, she concluded it would be better to go the following morning to the Hôtel-Dieu and have an interview with her father after the classes.

Then, as in the far-away time when she was a house-surgeon, she set out at half-past eight for the hospital, passing through the rue du Cloître, along the length of which each of the many buttresses of Notre-Dame arose towards the heavens like a miniature cathedral, slender

and aerial; she perceived the Parvis, and behind the trees of the sidewalk the portico of the Hôtel-Dieu. A fit of trembling seized her like that felt by a patient before the moment of a terrible surgical operation. It was a great blow to her beautiful, brave spirit to return for the last time to that hospital where she had cherished so many dreams, made her first success, and that now would be the scene of her abdication. But she felt strong even in her dejection.

The Hôtel-Dieu was unchanged in the entrance hall: the students tramped loudly as they arrived in bands; the attendants were robed in blue, while the porters verified the tickets of entrance. Thérèse passed in; she saw the two interior courts with their extending terraces, galleries, and arches. The patients of the past were succeeded by other patients, lying in the same beds, with the same diseases, the same groans, carrying out an eternal identity. Nothing excited in her the passion of her *métier* more than that museum of pathology found in a hospital. She would have stopped in each ward, examined each case, penetrated into all the mysteries laid bare by science. When she reached the class of her father in the female ward, on the second floor, the house-surgeon, a big blond youth, asked her what it was she desired.

But she, in a dream, without answering, looked behind him, through the open door, to the little laboratory where for many months she had prepared her *Thèse*. She recognised the bottles, the gas-stove, the microscope, even the queer penholder left on the table by some eccentric house-surgeon that she had used so often. At last she spoke.

"Has Dr. Herlinge arrived?"

"Ah! Mademoiselle," said the young man, "I do not know at what hour the *patron* comes to us to-day. There will be a service on the first floor this morning, a class for the admission of a chief. Herlinge is the examiner,

with Artout, Durand, Blondet and Boussard. . . . On the decision of the three professors depends the election of a woman-doctor to the distinguished post of one of the physicians-in-chief to the hospital. If she is chosen, that will be a new departure—a woman-chief, la!" Thérèse had been so immersed in her secret sorrow that she heard nothing of the excitement in the medical world about the woman candidate.

"Ah! who is the candidate?" she asked with sudden interest.

"Oh!" replied the young man, with a mocking laugh, "an old *sabot* of medicine, Madame Marie Boisselière, a southern woman!"

"Madame Boisselière," repeated Thérèse, "I have heard her spoken of very highly."

She thanked the house-surgeon, and as she descended the stairs:

"You cannot see Monsieur Herlinge to-day, Mademoiselle," he called after her; "he is too busy with the conference."

As Thérèse descended, the sound of voices arose from the floor below. She could distinguish the powerful, sonorous tones of Artout; an excited group was gathered on the lower floor, and on the great landing-place, with its planks of blackened wood, of the first floor she came face to face with her father, who was gesticulating nervously as he talked with Boussard, Artout, and Durand. Blondet followed with another surgeon of the hospital, five or six young doctors, come to assist at the class of Herlinge, and a group of students in their white blouses. Among them Thérèse met the two little *bénévoles* that she had seen at Beaujon the previous autumn, and who were now taking their course of study at the Hôtel-Dieu.

The whole of that gathering of professors, doctors, and

students was excited and surprised over the nomination of a woman to the post of doctor-in-chief to the hospital. It was without precedent; the spirit of recrimination reigned; every one was disputing, protesting against the triumph of a woman in what they deemed their own exclusive province—the office of chief of the hospital. Artout's judgment was that she should have the "coller" by all possible means. Boussard remained phlegmatic, plunged in a silence that none could read; Herlinge supported the recognised rules of the occasion and examined the woman-candidate with the complete impartiality that he would have done had she been a man. The wisdom of his course seemed to be confirmed when his eyes encountered those of his daughter: his face cleared with a smile as he exclaimed:

"Ah! there you are, my little girl. You came to assist at the examination of Madame Boisselière. Ah! if she fulfils our expectations it will be a great success for your cause."

"I did not come for that, father. I have something to tell you. The time was too short for me to go to the avenue Victor-Hugo, and I thought I might come here."

"Very good, very good! I will be with you in a moment."

Frail, energetic, more nervous than ever, he sought the ward to give an abridged lecture to the students on the case of the candidate. When he entered the hall, his small, delicate white silhouette, under the black cap, could be seen slowly passing each bed. On the landing where several of the students lingered to continue their discussion there was a sudden silence caused by the arrival of two women. Every eye was turned to them as they slowly ascended the staircase: it was the doctoress Lancelevée, accompanied by her friend, the successful candidate,

Mademoiselle Boisselière. She was a tall woman of apparently forty-five years; her hair, cut short, was crowned by a travelling cap that accentuated her masculine appearance; a high paper collar seemed to strangle her, while a man's cravat of racing-colours spread its broad ends over her ample chest. She had the face of an old maid who scorned love; strong features, and a heavy shade of down on the upper lip that completed her masculine air.

The "celebrated confrères" were received with marked courtesy. Boussard seeing Madame Lancelevée, smiled on her with that smile of mingled love and sadness that Thérèse had noted in Switzerland. They approached and shook hands, while Madame Lancelevée murmured furtively:

"I have not a moment to spare to-day. Will you come to *déjeuner* to-morrow? I have no consultations," while Thérèse, on her guard, heard only that phrase by which she gauged the suffering of the lover who listened with melancholy deference to that secret command. She loved her master with the sincere, pure admiration that was expressed in the words: "My great Boussard," but she was revolted by his suffering, to see him without home or family at the beck and call of that woman who responded to his passionate love by distilling, capriciously, little drops of happiness to him. Then an idea came to her. Proud of her sacrifice, that suddenly seemed to be a necessity to her, she resolved to announce it here, in the midst of this representative gathering of the medical profession, not as a sacrifice, a desertion, but a victory in which she gloried. She would proclaim to them the triumph of her heart over her head, to challenge that Lancelevée who scorned the noble abnegation of a woman's identity in the married state and chose the lowest plane of free love, the pleasures of the married state without its sacred duties.

At that moment Dr. Herlinge left the ward, followed by the house-surgeons. He was in his blouse and apron. Artout wore a frock-coat, Boussard in lounge jacket, while Durand-Blondet was in his shirt sleeves, carrying his blouse on his arm. The young doctors were whispering together, talking of Marie Boisselière, once a teacher without a sou, who had come from Bordeaux when she was only twenty years old, to give lessons, and who, one day, suddenly took it into her head to study medicine in order to pull herself out of a life of miserable mediocrity. She had in her head solid, like that of a man, a masculine brain, and her studies progressed vigorously: it was not long before she found herself one of the first house-surgeons of the Paris hospitals. Once established, success came quickly. Thérèse observed her secretly. She was strongly built, and her frank ugliness, her evident desire to appear masculine, gave one the impression that love had never troubled her head. She was one of those born to live alone, to whom nothing counted but self, and who could never hope to meet the husband who would assure their existence. Thérèse, full of the sweetness of her secret goodness, thought of the magnificent compensation that the career of medicine held forth to those lonely sisters, abandoned and unhappy through the lack of feminine grace and beauty.

The Russian students, more poorly clad than the Dina of former days, were ascending quickly and modestly to the principal ward. Thérèse's kind heart went out to them in their touching humanity and zeal. She wished them every chance and success that good fortune could shower upon them, as she thought of the happy Dina. But, when her eyes dwelt on the two little French *bénévoles*, who resembled in their white blouses the big boarding-school girls, their blonde hair, rosy cheeks and healthy air, seemed to her more worthy of future maternity and the cares of

the family than the career they were striving to obtain. All the old customs of the French *bourgeois*, to which these two young girls belonged, aroused within her the wish to lecture them gravely.

" Little intellectuals, vivacious and pretty, work, occupy the passion, the transports of your youth in your beautiful studies, prepare for the contingencies of life by providing yourselves with a profession, the most noble of all professions, whereby a living is gained, magnificently, that is likewise a consolation to your solitude; but if nothing prevents it, when the day comes, abandon yourselves to the supreme law that makes the perfect woman, who lives not for herself alone, but for the husband whose happiness and helpmate she was born to be. When that day comes renounce all your desires for glory, offer to the one whom you love your bright intelligence to make for him a happy fireside. Give yourself to him entirely, all that you are—your heart, your soul, your body."

" Do you wish to speak to me, Thérèse ? " said the voice of Herlinge, breaking upon her reverie. " Shall we go upstairs to my ward ? "

" Oh ! what I have to tell you is no secret," replied Thérèse, with a smile slightly mysterious.

She looked at the two little *bénévoles* in their smocks of the student, at Madame Lancelevée blooming so proudly in her success, her love and her egotism, at Marie Boisselière, the robust *féministe* who had braved the great medical orators, at Artout, who would be indignant with her, at " her great Boussard," who had said to her one day, " Dear madame, you will come to that "—she looked at all the young doctors who envied her success, and the students crowding on the landing-place as they arrived, whispering and hurriedly tying the strings of their blouses; and as all eyes were turned towards her, she made her avowal:

"Father, I have come to tell you that I am leaving my profession."

"You are abandoning medicine?"

"Yes! I am no longer a doctor. I shall practise no more."

Herlinge straightened himself and looked at her interrogatively, thinking he had not heard aright.

"Dear father," she repeated, "this may astonish you. It is true, my husband has long desired it, but I could not decide. Then, I have finished by admitting that the home was not very pleasant for him, and for the reason that I have worked too much these last few months I need repose as well: that is how I have come to follow the example of Madame Pautel, that I once so strongly disapproved."

"Ah! what is this, little one?" cried Madame Lancelevée. "It is unworthy of you. I would never have believed it. No, no! I would never have believed it."

That strange woman, as if she felt personally the disloyalty of Thérèse to her profession, was pale with anger. But Artout, fixing his gaze curiously on his pupil, very much perplexed by what he heard and a little disconcerted, said quietly:

"If Madame Gueméné has decided to do this, it is because she, no doubt, has good reasons. I have too much confidence in her to censure her decision, to pry into the secrets of a young family. As a doctor I deplore the loss of my young confrère, but as a friend I applaud the step she has taken for the best."

"Ah, is Madame the doctoress Gueméné?" demanded Marie Boisselière almost fiercely. She advanced towards Thérèse, raised her lorgnette to her near-sighted eyes with the bullying air of an old schoolmistress as she explained:

"I regret to make your acquaintance, Madame, on such an occasion as this."

She said no more, but Boussard, who had not yet spoken, approached Thérèse and shook her hand.

"As for me, I congratulate you," was all he said, in a tone so full of meaning that she was touched almost to tears.

At the same moment Madame Lancelevée turned her back on them with marked displeasure, and began to speak with her friend Boisselière in an ostentatious manner about medicine.

"I must go and take the news to your mother," said Herlinge somewhat sadly. "She will be very much surprised—very much indeed."

He was moved by a feeling of deep regret and disappointment. He had been as proud of Thérèse as he would have been of a son. All his ambitions were satisfied, he lived again in the future of his daughter, and in giving his influence to the admission of Marie Boisselière to the Hôtel-Dieu, it was whispered at the time that his fatherly pride had created that precedent with a view to seeing the doctoress Gueméné likewise honoured.

The little *bénévoles* opened their great eyes at this scene; the doctors present felt the deepest sympathy and admiration for that lovely young doctoress metamorphosed into a simple woman. The students were full of secret amusement as they whispered:

"One doctor less—what difference? The patients are always with us."

Thérèse was satisfied with the effect she had made by that last coquetry before the assembled staff and pupils of the hospital. She left the hall, but not without wishing "good luck" to that old Princess of Science who had opened the way to future candidates for the chair of medicine in the great hospital. All present remained a little depressed by the scene; there was a silence among them

until the last echo of Thérèse's footsteps resounded in the hall below.

. . . . .

Thérèse left the Hôtel-Dieu full of joy over having done her duty. She hastened home with a feeling of nervous uncertainty as to the way in which Fernand would receive the news of her abdication. When she arrived, she went straight to her study and set about writing the addresses on the circulars. As she wrote the names of her patients she realised how great a sacrifice she was making for her love ; but her work was sweet to her.

Fernand returned at eleven o'clock from the laboratory and asked for his wife. The servant answered that Madame was working in her cabinet. When he opened the door of her room Thérèse experienced one of the most vivid emotions of her life. She turned to her husband with a heart palpitating with love and expectation, but he merely said :

" Thérèse, I have come to tell you I shall not take *déjeuner* here ; I have been called to a consultation at St.-Cloud. I am going now ! "

He appeared nervous and preoccupied. Thérèse felt on the point of fainting. She signed to him to approach, and in a voice weak as a whisper said :

" Come, come and see what I have done."

She had in that moment the keen intuition that he was going to the " other," that he was about to leave her for ever. Then she rallied for a last supreme effort.

" Why ? What do you want ? I am in a hurry—you know it ! "

His impatient words wounded her cruelly. He approached the table and leaned over it ; he looked at the pile of printed leaflets without understanding what they were about. Then, taking a circular she held it up close to his eyes that he might read.

"*Dr. Thérèse Gueméné has the honour to inform M—— that for reasons of her health, she is giving up the practice of medicine.*"

He was silent, motionless, as though hypnotised by the leaflet that trembled lightly in his shaking hand. Thérèse waited, breathless, then she regained her voice sufficiently to murmur :

"Well, my dear, are you happy? Tell me. That which you desired is accomplished."

She saw him grow pale; he remained silent, his features contracting, the paper still between his fingers; he expressed neither joy nor satisfaction. He was rigid with astonishment and chilled with the realisation of that act of abnegation.

"But speak! speak to me!" cried Thérèse. "You know, now, how fully I love you; it is like tearing away a part of my body to give it to you. I am no longer anything in life, nothing but your wife. I am all yours—at last!"

"My poor Thérèse," he answered, as though making a painful effort. "My poor Thérèse, I am appalled at what you have done. It must not be—no! No, it must not be; it is a crime. You love your *métier*, you have found in it a great pleasure. That profession has given you a superior personality, an intangible prestige; the whole world honours your integrity. Ah! why have you done this?"

Thérèse arose, trembling with astonishment.

"Why?" she exclaimed; "you ask me why? Do you not understand?"

"Yes, my good Thérèse, I understand. I thank you; but, look you. I am deeply moved to think you have broken your life for me. It is worth more, I know—then—I fear that you will regret. I do not wish to make you miserable."

"So!" she said, with a look of indescribable sadness; "this is all you have to say to me. You no longer love me. You have given your heart to another woman; you have mortally wounded me, and I, I have not ceased to cherish you. I have repented of all the pains I have caused you; and for love of you I have stripped myself of all that was most dear to me. I have vowed myself to you, I have sworn to you that henceforth I would exist only for your happiness; and when you see me still bleeding from my sacrifice, you say—that is not enough. Oh! Fernand!"

She was seized by sobs. She sank beside the table and buried her face in her hands. This, then, was her recompense. What remained to her now?

Fernand bent over her with that affectionate commiseration that was like an injury to the passionate love of the young wife; he called her softly:

"Thérèse, my good Thérèse. I am very much touched—deeply touched, I assure you—be consoled."

She wept, as he would never have believed one so proud capable of weeping. All her body was wrenched with the strength of that distressing grief. She was a figure of despair and sorrow. Fernand contemplated her, while his heart was torn between pity and rancour over the sacrifice that had come too late, and also placed him in such a miserable position. And as he watched that wife, humiliated, bruised, convulsed with grief, the radiant face of Madame Jourdeaux, her smile, her mystery, conquered him, filled him with burning desire, a sort of ecstasy of triumph. He grew impatient to leave that miserable companion, that room, that house where he had lied so dishonourably; for he was not called to St.-Cloud, but was going to the boulevard St.-Martin, where the widow awaited him for *déjeuner*.

"Thérèse," he repeated, anxious to put an end to that

scene, " do not let me carry away this distressing impression. My confrère is waiting for me at the railway station, and I must go. I beg of you, give me a reasonable word before I go. We will speak of your career later—you must not give it up. I do not wish to see you miserable, my Thérèse—my good Thérèse ! "

There was no response, and he was secretly irritated under the restraint of that air of gentleness and forbearance he was obliged to assume. At length the young wife, as though worn out with that struggle raised her head, " Go, my friend ; henceforth you will find me always here."

She spoke without bitterness, gently, and with that air of sweet resignation that reminded him of the sweetness of Madame Jourdeaux, but without the noble grandeur of Thérèse. The strange resemblance disturbed him. Thérèse received without shrinking the cold kiss he gave her, then he left the room. Her eyes followed him, while her heart sank with the awful certainty that she would never regain him.

. . . . .

Madame Jourdeaux was awaiting him in the salon. It was the first time she had received him there. In the dim light of the room Fernand found her, transformed, very beautiful, very alluring despite her pallor and the widow's mourning that she still wore through a religious sense of duty. He was himself the prey of a terrible state of over-excitement. He pressed her hands violently, sighing out the words :

" Oh ! my friend, my friend, I have longed to see you."

Her eyes flashed with a new light as she answered :

" What is it you wish now ? "

" I am in a most pitiable situation. I feel myself lost, I can see no way out. I do not know what will be my future.

I do not wish to live, to think! Consider me a little child, like André, and take care of me. You are so sweet, my friend; you are so strong. Will you protect me—guide me?"

She hesitated a moment, and then said warmly:

"With all the power of my friendship for you, I promise to help you; but, what is it I must do?"

"Give me courage, assure me that you will never abandon me."

"Oh! how could I abandon you? It would be the same as if some one asked me to abandon André. Destiny has brought us together; I have found you sad and unhappy. I am younger, yet I am more sad, more alone than you, and for that reason I have taken you to my heart. Your unhappiness makes you appear helpless, and I feel myself older and stronger than you."

She laughed lightly, and continued with a motherly air:

"Sometimes I imagine that I have two sons, one very little, and the other very big, very big, indeed; they are equally dear to me, but what have you done to-day?"

He burned with the desire to tell her of the new trouble in his life, through the renouncement of Thérèse; but he feared that her scrupulous friendship would see an obstacle in the return of Thérèse to her duties as wife. The servant announced *déjeuner*, and he concluded to spare himself further revelations, for the moment.

He did not enjoy that repast so carefully prepared to please him by that kind woman. The words they exchanged, the metamorphosis that he wished to make in her, and, above all, the haunting souvenir of Thérèse in tears, the torture he had endured in that interview oppressed him and robbed him of all appetite. It was true, Madame Jourdeaux was more beautiful than ever; his eyes sought hers unceasingly; the feeling of the need of an absolute

union between them grew within him, and he saw that the same insidious passion was taking possession of her. Besides, what an existence would be his, between the woman he no longer loved, and the clandestine friendship with the other, and suddenly the revelation came to him there, at that table, that the woman who contemplated him with such affection, such gracious kindness, was his true wife.

After the repast she proposed returning to the drawing-room.

"I do not like that ceremonious room. It will rest me more if I pass a few moments with you in your room, so familiar and pleasant to me."

The governess came to fetch the little André for his lessons, and they were alone together, beside the work-table. Through the muslin curtains of the windows, the walls of the opposite building, intersected by the kitchen windows of the various apartments, could be seen; the rays of the sun falling obliquely on them rendered the white plaster oppressively dazzling. On the bureau the hands of the clock pointed to the hour, two o'clock, its tick-tack resounding through the room, fragrant with tea-roses that Madame Jourdeaux, divining that he would prefer to rest there, had placed in numerous vases. She took up the piece of embroidery to continue her work, but Gueméné exclaimed imperiously:

"No! no! do not work."

She found it delightful to submit, and laid the embroidery aside.

"Give me your hand," he demanded.

It was a plump, pretty hand, upon which many jewelled rings flashed. Gueméné kissed it and rubbed it caressingly; held it to his temples, his hair, saying:

"I am deprived of these sweet little caresses, those trifles that make a man happy."

She smiled indulgently, with the delicious pity that seemed to sanctify everything between them.

"Poor friend," she asked, "is your wife so very indifferent to you as that?"

"Ah!" he answered, with the cynical injustice of his passion, "my wife has separated my life from hers. I am only thirty-five, and my heart is walled in like a tomb."

She shuddered, and in silence disengaged her hand, then, selecting a thread of silk, took up the needle; but she trembled so, her eyes were so full of tears, she could not see to thread it.

Presently he whispered imploringly:

"Say to me, 'I love you.'"

She drew away and sat erect.

"No, no; it would not be right."

"Why would it not be right? You are alone, you are your own mistress, of your heart, and of your body. I have given you all the love of my soul, my whole thought. I carry your image with me day and night; I am the only being that you cherish with all the strength of your tender, loving heart, and you refuse me that joy, prevent your lips from offering me those three words that will make me supremely happy."

"Oh! my friend, my friend," she murmured in alarm. "Calm yourself, I implore you. You must not; you have no right—you belong to another."

"But that other one has driven me from her by her egotism, her hardness, by her terrible pride; she has withdrawn herself from me, she has raised a barrier between our souls. . . . Then I am condemned to drag out an existence without love to the end, tied to a woman I do not love, when it is you that I love, my friend, and for so long that now I am forced to avow it. I have not dared to tell you, although we both know it so well."

"Ah!" she murmured, her eyes closed in a feeling of profound happiness, "I know it, I know it; it is so sweet to listen to you."

"Then," he continued, drawing nearer to her, "let me feel again your dear hand on my forehead; let me hear from your lips those tender words that will give me all. . ."

"Fernand! Fernand!" she implored. "I fear to do wrong."

"Love is beautiful and good," he said, taking her in his arms. "Love is holy. Be to me that young and adorable mother who heals all sorrows; be mine absolutely, without a hidden thought, without reserve. See how completely I love you!"

Then in that moment of overpowering emotion she gave him the first kisses of passion her heart had ever felt; but it was a brief impulse, an embrace from which she quickly disengaged herself as her conscience reasserted itself and filled her with alarm.

"Go now, come to-morrow; I will know better what to say —I shall be mistress of myself. Go, go! I fear that André may return. You know well that I have done wrong."

Then he proposed a meeting on the following day, somewhere far from her home, in a quiet corner; a desire came to him to take her for a little excursion in the country, like the young people of the lower classes. She blushed over the idea of that rendezvous. He clasped her in his arms again; coaxing her as he would an innocent little child, and showing her in simple words how natural and noble was their love. She could no longer defend herself; she was at the end of her strength, thinking that she would put off the struggle until the next day, when she would be calmer, perhaps stronger. The sound of a step behind the door separated them; they stood apart, their cheeks slightly flushed.

The servant entered with a card on a tray.

"The lady wishes to speak to Madame."

The face of the young woman clouded as she glanced at the card; she drew herself erect, and with her usual presence of mind said simply:

"Very well, ask the lady to wait. I shall be with her in a moment."

She turned to speak, hesitated—opened her lips two or three times, and finally said to Fernand:

"You must excuse me. I must see this person. Go, my dear—no, stop; not that door—it is most important. I cannot wait."

And with nervous haste, rolling the card between her fingers, she gently pushed Gueméné towards the door leading into the entrance-hall; but he stopped to speak again of the meeting on the morrow.

"But where will you meet me?"

"I will write you, I promise you, before this evening."

"You promise?"

When he had disappeared, she looked at the card in the palm of her hand. Her heart beat to suffocation as she read:

"Dr. Thérèse Gueméné."

A wave of hatred rushed over her, a feeling of animosity never before experienced, against the wicked woman who had ruined the life of Fernand. That sentiment was so strong that it rendered her brave, almost insolent, as she murmured:

"She spies on him now."

Having arranged her disordered hair before the glass, she went to the drawing-room, intrepid, ready to undergo any insult for the sake of the one who was hers for ever.

. . . . .

Thérèse was waiting at the end of the room, beside the

piano. She was robed in black, but of that haughty image in Madame Jourdeaux's mind nothing appeared but the slight figure of a young woman with great sad eyes, in which there was neither arrogance, disdain, reproach, nor hatred.

A little timidly they edged near one another; each striving to penetrate the thoughts of the other before speaking a word.

The humble attitude of Thérèse somewhat appeased the tender-hearted woman before her.

"You wished to see me, Madame?"

"It is necessary I should see you," corrected Thérèse in frank tones, with a desire so evidently sincere that Madame Jourdeaux had a presentiment of the object of her visit.

Again they looked at each other with defiance, like two hostile women holding themselves cautiously reserved through courtesy.

Their noble hearts and fine intelligence made them equal, worthy of one another, while the same height and appearance due to the fashionable robe gave them a remarkable resemblance. At length Thérèse spoke.

"Some one has told you, Madame, that I was proud and haughty, a cold, hard, egotistical woman. It is because I esteem you highly that I have come to you to-day. I wish that you would esteem me, also that you would know me and judge me. I am not a proud woman, but a suffering woman. I know you are good, and I come to ask your help in a great misfortune that has befallen me."

"If I can be of use to you in any way, Madame, you have my help."

After a pause, Thérèse, with a strong effort, began:

"Madame, I have an excellent mother, to whom I have never spoken of what I am about to acknowledge to you. I have told no one, and it is for the first time that these

words, which cut me so deeply, have crossed my lips. I wish you to know all, in order that you may understand the mark of absolute confidence I am giving you. I ask your confidence in exchange."

Madame Jourdeaux lost her air of aggressive assurance. She believed that she could still feel around her neck the arms of one who was the husband of the woman standing before her; she felt his kisses, heard his words of passionate love, his embrace. Her face grew very white, but she answered bravely:

"Madame, you have all my confidence. I again repeat, if I can render you a service, command me."

"It is four years," continued Thérèse, "since I married Dr. Gueméné. I was twenty-five, and no longer a girl. I had very little of the sentimentality of youth. I was very fresh, very inexperienced, with false ideas, sometimes very exaggerated, and sometimes very narrow. I had not finished my medical studies when the doctor asked me to renounce them. I would not consent. We were married, and we have known great happiness in the exchange of a love supreme and tender."

Her voice broke; she recovered herself with an effort, and continued:

"The doctor is a man with the most beautiful and tender nature; he was the most kind and considerate companion in our home; I loved him, and I also loved my profession. A woman must love her husband alone—I know it to my cost. I wished to combine my great happiness as a wife with the power I found in my *métier*. You see, Madame, the confession I make you. . . . While I was happy my husband was not. That part of my life had been for a long time a constant cause of pain and unhappiness to him. My punishment came quickly. I had a beautiful little baby that I lost, perhaps—I have never had the courage to

acknowledge it—through my own fault; and my husband that I love, I have lost him also."

She closed her eyes for an instant, as though she would gather some hidden strength to enable her to continue, then she said, very low and pitifully:

"That is the proud and haughty woman that you have before you, Madame. She tells you all her pain, all her humiliation, as she would tell to the most faithful of friends. You can understand me, I know, and for that reason I have chosen to tell you. My husband, who has suffered in his home, who has seen his dream perish, has taken his heart from me, and given it to another woman. That woman I know, I esteem her, but I must judge her. She has taken my happiness from me, she holds it in her hands. Perhaps if she knew a little of what I suffer she would not keep it from me. What would you do, Madame, if a woman had used you like that—taken from your heart and your love the husband you loved so passionately?"

Both were very pale and hung their heads in the silence that ensued.

Presently Madame Jourdeaux began timidly:

"Perhaps I would find that woman very loyal, and, if she was not guilty, if she had nothing to reproach herself with but a sentiment most pure, without fault, without stain, she might receive me like a friend—both love the same man. We would have suffered much, and, as for me, I would not have condemned her."

"Yes," said Thérèse dreamily, "you would have done right."

They looked at each other. Tears sparkled in their eyes.

Thérèse exclaimed:

"I am no longer a doctor. I wished to give to the one who has abandoned me the supreme proof of my

love by sacrificing the half of my life, but I have now so small a place in his thoughts that he is no longer interested by my acts. Therefore, the anguish of heart that I have undergone—and you can understand, Madame, that it seemed like the beginning of death to cease to be what I was—the rending of my life has been useless. I have not regained that heart that belongs, henceforth, to another. If there will be no happiness for me in my home, there will be none for that inconstant companion, who will be always miserable to know that he has strayed far from the peace and the order of the family. If that one whom he believes he loves, loves him truly, she would wish to see him restored to his home."

"Madame," replied that gentle woman, striving to keep back her tears, "that one whom your husband loves is not as worthy as you are. You are the greatest, the most generous, you are the one to whom he will finally return, for you are bound to him by the oldest ties, the truest, the sovereign bonds of the wife. That woman regrets cruelly to have misjudged you. You will see—you will see—she will disappear. She will efface her memory from the one you love. You will possess him anew, and more completely than ever. . . ."

"Is it possible ?" faltered Thérèse.

"Be sure of it, Madame," answered Madame Jourdeaux.

When they were parting, they clasped hands at the door. The widow asked,

"Will you kiss me, Madame ?"

They kissed like sisters who were never again to meet.

. . . . .

The following day Gueméné was seated at the table in his cabinet when a letter was brought to him. He trembled with happiness. It was a letter from Madame

Jourdeaux, so feverishly expected since the day before. He tore it open and read:

"My Friend,—

"*Pardon me the pain I am about to give you. I have awakened from a long and guilty dream. God has permitted that I should awake before it was too late.*

"*You have a noble wife that it is your duty to make happy.*

"*If she has faults, have you not exaggerated them? Examine them better, examine yourself, see if the deep roots of your former love are not still planted in the bottom of your heart. I have a son, who will be twenty years old one day. I am his teacher, and must ever be for him the ideal of that which is good. What right have I to abandon myself to an unspeakable weakness? What could I answer him the day he would discover in the past of his mother a secret that she must drag with her to the end, hide it in falsehood and incessant duplicity? What would have been between us? Certainly a great love, a sweet, tender friendship, but also a happiness without foundation, established outside all order and all law. Our destinies divide us; you have your wife and I have my son. There is for each of us the course of the only true existence, and that is a life of morality and goodness. We could not give ourselves to each other, my poor dear friend, without renouncing all peace and dignity. Our irregular love would end in bitterness and in shame.*

"*To-day it ends in pure tears of farewell. You will not find me at the boulevard St.-Martin, my friend. I leave for Lorraine, my country, where I will rejoin my father, who lives there alone. With that dear old man, my darling little son, and the memory of our friendship, my life will roll calmly on. As for you, return with all your will to the companion whom you swore to love eternally on your wedding-day. . . .*"

. . . . .

Two hours later, Thérèse, alarmed at not hearing him leave the house, went to the cabinet of her husband.

She found him prostrate before the table, his hands pressed to his temples, his eyes red with weeping, an open letter spread out on the blotting-case. She suddenly divined the truth, the promise of yesterday, but she had not expected it so promptly, so completely. She approached him a little fearfully; then she understood that could not be an effusion, a passionate outburst to reclaim her husband from her. A great hope for the future sprung up in her heart. She went close to him and murmured gently:

"You have a great grief, Fernand, but you are not alone. A friend is here to console you. . . . I am all to you now, you will have me always . . . the home will be very sweet. What shall I make of my cabinet of consultation? . . . Perhaps a laboratory of serotherapy to save you the daily walk to the École. You have a work to accomplish, Fernand. I will aid you. . . . You will triumph. . . . I will be your companion, simply your obscure tutor, as Dina Skaroff said here that day, so sweetly, 'your assistant. . . .'"

Gueméné, broken, the soul sick, turned to Thérèse. He still suffered, and gave himself into her care like one helplessly wounded. . . . It was the season of nesting. In the Italian poplars quivering above the flowing river, a grey pigeon, with collar of silken green, fondled with his smooth beak, like a rose-coral jewel, the shimmering breast of his mate.

THE END

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